Stefan Grossman's

Masters of Country Blues Guitar

The Music of

Mississippi John Hurt

includes

TABLATURE &
ORIGINAL RECORDINGS

Editor: **Aaron Stang**

Copyright © 1993 CPP/Belwin, Inc.

15800 N.W. 48th Avenue, Miami, FL 33014

WARNING: Any duplication adaptation or arrangement of the compositions contained in this collection, without the written consent of the owner, is an infringement of U.S. copyright law and subject to the penalties and liabilities provided therein.

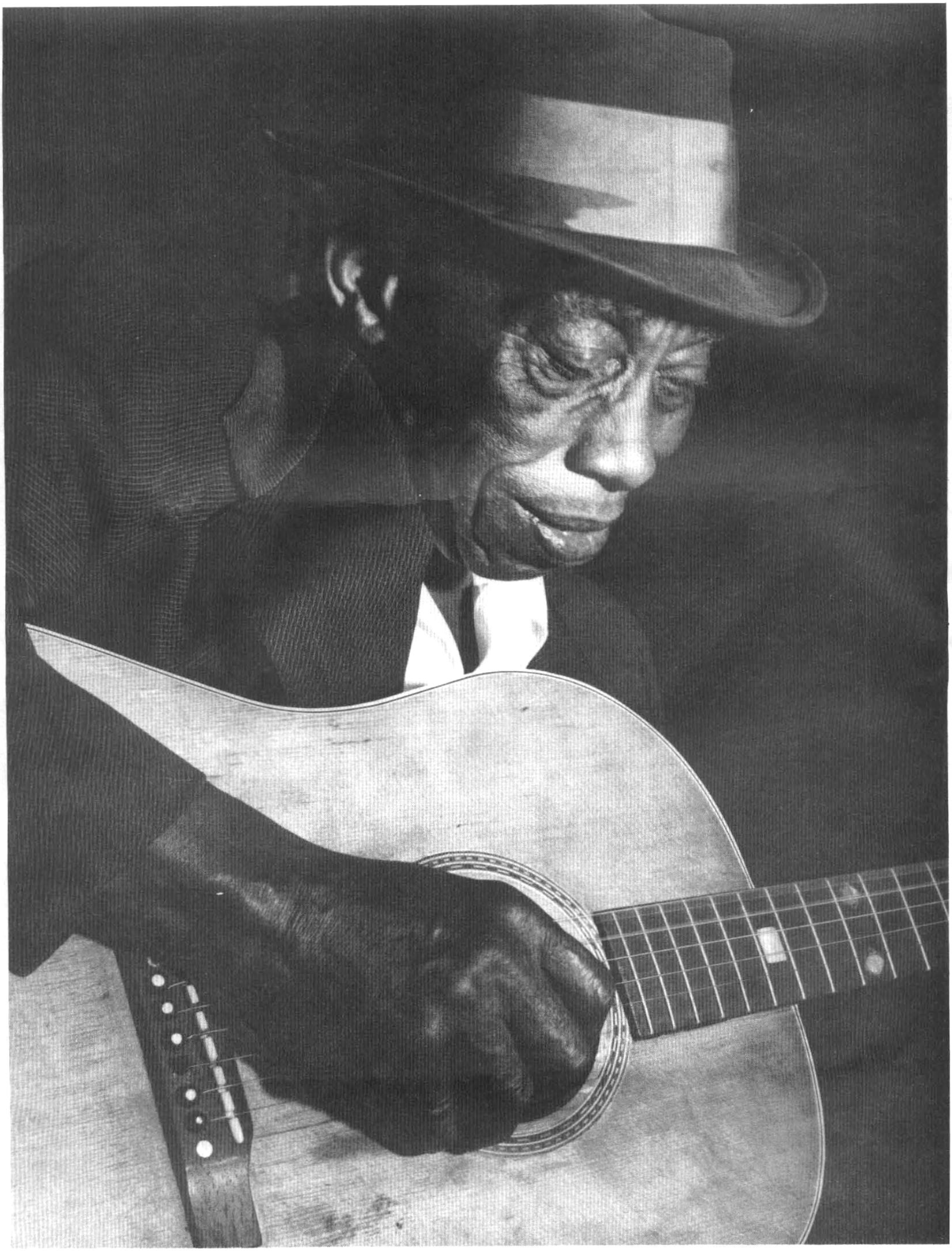


Photo by J. Robert Mantl

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction by Stefan Grossman . . . 4
Mississippi John Hurt by Jas Obrecht . . . 6
Explanation of the Tab/Music System . . . 10

Key of G

Shake That Thing . . . 12
Spike Driver's Blues . . . 15
Casey Jones . . . 17
Got The Blues, Can't Be Satisfied . . . 22
Joe Turner Blues . . . 25

Key of C

Stocktime . . . 28
Hey Baby, Right Away . . . 30
Ain't Nobody But You Babe . . . 32
Make Me A Pallet On Your Floor . . . 34
Nobody's Dirty Business . . . 39
Richlands Women Blues . . . 42
Louis Collins . . . 49
Blessed Be The Name . . . 54
Praying On The Old Camp Grounds . . . 57
Let The Mermaids Flirt With Me . . . 59
Corrinna, Corrinna . . . 62

Key of E

Oh Mary Don't You Weep . . . 64
Avalon Blues . . . 66
Sliding Delta . . . 70

Key of A

Coffee Blues . . . 73
Monday Morning Blues . . . 76
Candyman . . . 80

Key of D

Trouble I've Had All My Days . . . 84
See See Rider . . . 88
Stack O'Lee Blues . . . 91
Big Leg Blues . . . 93

INTRODUCTION

by Stefan Grossman

This collection has been a pleasure to put together. I first heard the recordings of Mississippi John Hurt when I was 15 years old. He had recorded 20 sides for the OKeh record company in 1928 of which 12 had been released. During the folk revival of the 1960s reissue albums began to appear and many old blues recordings found their way to the grooves of LPs. John Hurt's arrangements for *Spike Driver Blues, Frankie, Stagolee, Nobody's Dirty Business, Candyman, Louis Collins* and *Got The Blues Can't Be Satisfied* became necessary ingredients to any young fingerpicker's repertoire.

John Hurt's old recordings had a magnetic atmosphere and a strong lyrical content that made them attractive to both players and listeners. His guitar style was easily recognizable. The alternating bass pattern evoked the piano sounds of turn-of-the-century America and against this a melody line was interweaved. The same approach was explored during the mid-1950s by White guitarists such as Merle Travis and Chet Atkins. By the 1960s this guitar technique was completely embraced by folksingers as far afield as Bob Dylan, Dave Van Ronk, Stephen Stills to Joan Baez.

Then in 1963, miracle of miracles occurred when Tom Hoskin decided to try and locate the "legendary" Mississippi John Hurt. John had recorded a song during his 1928 sessions titled *Avalon Blues.* The current maps of Mississippi did not show a town called Avalon but in an 1878 Atlas, Avalon was shown as a small dot between Greenwood and Grenada, Mississippi. Tom headed south from Washington, D.C. and two days later pulled into Stinson's store, an old combination gas station, general store and post office which, with the owners house, comprised the entirety of Avalon. Tom asked several men if they had ever heard or knew about a singer called Mississippi John Hurt and was amazed when they pointed down the dirt road and said :"'bout a mile down that road, third mail box up the hill. Can't miss it."

Tom brought John up to Washington, D.C. to record and perform and almost immediately Mississippi John Hurt was a hit on the folk music scene. He performed at folk clubs, The Newport Folk Festival, college campuses and even the Johnny Carson *Tonight Show!*

I met Mississippi John at his first concert in New York City. Tom was a friend of mine and the chance to hear as well as meet Mississippi John Hurt was almost too much for me to imagine. The concert presented John and Doc Boggs (another folk legend - but in this case in the story of White five-string mountain banjo playing). After the concert I went backstage to say hellos and Tom insisted that I play guitar for John and Doc. I picked a few of John's tunes that I had transcribed from his 1928 recordings. John started to dance while Doc laughed and banged out time on his banjo skin. This began my friendship with John Hurt that lasted until his death.

Mississippi John Hurt was a wonderful teacher. He patiently showed me his arrangements and licks as well as giving me insight into life itself. John Hurt was a unique man. He had a gentleness that could penetrate walls and a voice that could relax your soul while your feet danced to his guitar rhythms.

This collection brings together 26 great songs and guitar arrangements. All the keys that John played in are presented. On first listening, John Hurt's playing seems deceptively easy but to master his sound is quite a challenge. He used three fingers to play. His ring and little finger rested on the face of the guitar while he picked. The source of John's unique sound can be found in his thumb strokes. Basically an alternating bass is used throughout John's playing. The sound that is produced can be described as "bum-chick." The first beat hits the bass note with commitment but the second beat hits the string hard enough to have the other strings vibrate. As a result a "chick" is created! This is fundamental to John's style. The bass can stand by itself without any melody lines and still sound musical. When the treble lines are added these act almost as embellishments. The "John Hurt sound" is all in your thumb.

Fortunately there is some footage of John that comes from Pete Seeger's Rainbow Quest. Seeing John play will help you to better understand the power and eloquence of his playing and singing. I have included these performances in my video series *Country Blues Guitar Parts 1,2 & 3* (Stefan Grossman's Guitar Workshop, P.O.Box 802, Sparta, NJ 07871). I strongly recommend these videos as they focus on control over the alternating bass. Mississippi John recorded many excellent albums after his rediscovery that are essential to your library. Yazoo Records (P.O.Box 810, Newton, NJ 07860) has reissued all of John's 1928 recordings. Here's a list of currently available albums:

Mississippi John Hurt/1928 Sessions (Yazoo 1065)
Mississippi John Hurt/Avalon Blues (Rounder 1081)
Mississippi John Hurt/Worried Blues (Rounder 1082)
The Legacy Of Mississippi John Hurt (Rounder 1083)
Mississippi John Hurt/Today (Vanguard 79220)
The Immortal Mississippi John Hurt (Vanguard 79248)
Mississippi John Hurt/Last Sessions (Vanguards 79327)
The Best Of Mississippi John Hurt (Vanguard 19/20)
Mississippi John Hurt/Library Of Congress Sessions/ Avalon Blues (Flyright 06)
Mississippi John Hurt/Library Of Congress Recordings 1963/ Sacred and Secular (Heritage 320)

The cassette that accompanies this book contains all the songs presented. Please note that I have transcribed each tune in the key that Mississippi John played in. However, sometimes the recordings can be higher or lower in pitch depending on how John tuned his guitar for that session. I have also included some alternate transcriptions from John's Vanguard Recordings to illustrate how John could change his playing, whether with different phrases or licks or as in Corrina, Corrina with a completely different key setting. The alternate recordings are from his Vanguard recordings which we unfortunately could not include on the cassette but can be easily found on compact disc. My deep thanks to Yazoo Records and Rounder Records for allowing usage of their recordings. These are an indispensable part of this collection.

I have recorded a six cassette series, The Guitar Of Mississippi John Hurt (available from Stefan Grossman's Guitar Workshop), that explains in detail many of the arrangements in this book.

I hope you enjoy this collection as much as I have had in putting it together. My deepest thanks to Tom Hoskins, Louise Spottswood, Bill Nowlin, and Wynwood Music for making this project possible.

Enjoy,

Stefan Grossman

MISSISSIPPI JOHN HURT

By Jas Obrecht

Songster and bluesman, John Hurt had a beautifully syncopated fingerpicking style and a gentle, guileless voice. After making a handful of 78s, he faded from view during the Depression and then arose phoenix-like during the 1960s. Throughout his career, his music provided an aural passport to a bygone age of cakewalks and rags, parables and polite society.

Hurt was 35 years old when he journeyed alone from the Mississippi hill country to Memphis for his first session. It was Valentine's Day, 1928, and the experience was not entirely pleasant: "A great big hall with only Mr. Rockwell, one engineer, and myself," John remembered. "I sat on a chair and they pushed the microphone right up close to my mouth, and told me not to move after they found the right position. Oh, I was nervous, and my neck was sore for days after." Eight songs were cut that day, but only a single OKeh 78 was issued—"Nobody's Dirty Business" backed by "Frankie," one of his few songs in open tuning. Hurt was paid about $20 per song, a good fee for unproven talent. The original note on Columbia's file cards for the matrixes—"old time music"—was later changed to "race."

Hurt headed home and worked another season; under his sharecropping arrangement at the time, half of the corn and cotton he grew on 13 acres was turned over to the land owner. In November T.J. Rockwell wrote Hurt, inviting him to record again. John's December 21st session in New York City produced usable versions of "Ain't No Tellin'" (essentially new words set to the "Make Me Pallet On The Floor" melody), the murder ballad "Louis Collins," and "Avalon Blues." On December 28, 1928, Hurt was back in the studio for his final and most fruitful prewar session, cutting three spirituals and five blues. Of all Hurt's prewar sides, the one he composed his first day in New York, "Avalon Blues," proved to be the most important. Nearly four decades after its release, it would lead to his rediscovery:

"Avalon my home town,
always on my mind,
Avalon my home town,
always on my mind,
Pretty mama's in Avalon,
want me there all the time"

During the 1920s, when its population was less than a hundred, Avalon, Mississippi, was little more than a ramshackle rail settlement between Greenwood and Grenada. Born in nearby Teoc on July 3, 1893, John Smith Hurt spent most of his life living there in poverty. He had seven older brothers and two sisters. He made it through the fifth grade at St. James School, and around this time began teaching himself guitar: "I always tried to make my strings say just what I say," he'd explain. "I grab it and go my way with it. Use my melody with it." By age 12 John was singing "Good Mornin' Miss Carrie," "Satisfied," "Frankie And Johnny," and other non-blues songs at house parties, sometimes working with a fiddler. His gentle voice, relaxed feel, and light, idiosyncratic fingerpicking made his music far better suited for front-porch listening than cornfield stomps. Some nights, he remembered, he and a pal would awaken the neighbors with their playing: "We go along to people's private homes, way in the night, midnight, one o'clock. 'Serenadin" we call it. We knew you well, we tip up on the porch and we'd wake you up with music. Well, you might lay there and listen, you might not get up and ask us in. Sometimes you'd get up and say come on in."

Once when he was asked about the first blues he'd learned, Hurt played "Lazy Blues," a simple, original arrangement in E major that had more in common with Memphis players than Delta musicians such as Robert Johnson:

"Wake up in the morning, a towel tied
round her head,
When you speak to her, she swear she
almost dead"

During "Talking Casey," Hurt used a slide to imitate bells and quote familiar melodies—a technique similar to Blind Willie McTell in Atlanta—while thumbing train rhythms on his bass strings. He composed in many keys—E, A, D, and G, which was especially convenient for a strong alternating bass—but unlike many Delta musicians seemed to prefer C. Much of his music was probably a souvenir of his childhood. Asked by a white landlord how he created melodies, Hurt responded, "Well, sir, I just make it sound like I think it ought to."

After his father passed away, John helped his mother raise cotton, corn, and potatoes. To make ends meet, he sometimes hired himself out to a neighboring farm, while his mother washed clothes and cooked. During 1915 Hurt worked for the Illinois Central, jacking up and leveling railroad ties for $100 a month. His crew, he remembered, kept pace to a worksong rhythm: "Just one man keepin' time. Verses like 'Ida when you marry, I want you to marry me, Like a flower held, baby, you never see'—like that. I learned 'Spike Driver Blues' from a railroad hand called Walter Jackson. I just learned that song from calling track. 'Casey Jones' too." John quit the IC after five months, going back to help his mother on the farm. To earn extra money, he cut and hewed oak, pine, and cypress trees into eight-foot cross ties to sell to the railroad at a dollar apiece. It was grueling work, he remembered: "I towed many a cross ties I made across my shoulder."

Around 1923 Willie Narmour, a white square dance fiddler whose "Carroll County Blues" is still in many old-time repertoires, began using Hurt as a substitute for his regular partner Shell Smith. Relegated to the role of rhythm keeper, Hurt flatpicked his parts. A few years later, Narmour won a fiddle contest; first prize was a chance to record for OKeh. Arriving in Avalon to take Narmour to his field recording equipment in Memphis, producer Tommy Rockwell inquired about other local musicians. Narmour recommended Hurt and showed the OKeh executive to his shack. Hurt auditioned with "Monday Morning Blues," which led to his Valentine's day session. The "Mississippi" tag was added to his name as a sales gimmick.

Hurt had chance encounters with three famous blues personalities during his New York trip. He saw Bessie Smith holding a guitar while waiting for an elevator, and met Victoria Spivey in the hall outside the studio. "At that time they had a large recordin' room," he told Tom Hoskins and Nick Perls, "and they had a hallway between these buildings. They keep the door closed—you could hear nothin'. It was a glass door, bottom was wood, and you could ease up to the door and peak through. If you lay your head close upside the door, you could hear like somebody way across town. But you weren't goin' to get in there till your time comes, see?"

In Memphis he had met a man passing himself off as Lonnie Johnson, but on December 28 he met the real Lonnie Johnson: "He had did some recordin' just ahead of me. Me and Lonnie, we was in the recordin' room there. I had just written this 'Candy Man.' I had it written in pencil, and I forget some of the verses, so they typed them on the chart. So I was practicin' on it while they were gone. And Lonnie says, 'Ain't that a little too high? Gotta let it down, son.' I'll never forget the manager, T.J. Rockwell, come in and says, 'Whose been messin' with that chart?' Lonnie says, 'I did. I didn't think it would do any harm—it was too high.' That's how I know it was for sure Lonnie Johnson. We had us a little ball while we were goin'. I played the guitar, and he played the piano—oh, nice little ball. We went shoppin' or to his house, have a little party, dance. Oh yeah, had a big time." During the week in between his studio appearances, Hurt saved most of his $10 per diem by taking room and board at the home of the man assigned to deliver him to a hotel.

With his return to Avalon, John Hurt settled into a quiet rural life with his bride Jessie Lee. His records seemed to have had little impact, but he still played Saturday night dances around Avalon, Carrollton, and Greenwood. Usually appearing with fiddler Lee Anderson, he often played for whites. During the Depression Hurt worked for the WPA, earning three dollars a day felling trees, building dams and levees, and cutting gravel roads. His WPA schedule of seven days on followed by seven days off enabled him to continue farming. John Hurt never learned to drive a car, and he lived without electricity most of his life. Around the end of World War II he moved his family into a three-room house on A.R. Perkins' land, where he tended cows, filed hoes, and farmed until the 1960s.

Unbeknownst to Hurt, Folkways Records rereleased two of his old 78 songs in the early '50s as part of its American Folk Music series, and he had a circle of admirers. Most figured he was long dead, but Tom Hoskins, a young white musician living in Washington, D.C., had his doubts. After hearing a tape of "Avalon Blues" in 1963, Hoskins headed for Mississippi with an old atlas that showed Avalon along a secondary road. Locals directed him to the third mailbox up the hill, where, sure enough, dwelled Mr. Hurt. At the time, Hurt was working on a cattle ranch, cutting hay and helping with the cotton and corn harvests. Hoskins was thrilled to learn that Hurt's musical skills were intact, and talked him into coming to Washington, D.C., to begin a new career. "I thought he was the police," Hurt remembered. "When he asked me to J3come up North, I figured if I told him no, he'd take me anyway, so I said yes."

On July 15, 1963, Dick Spottswood took Hurt to Coolidge Auditorium at the Library of Congress to recut some of his 1920s sides and recreate the secular songs and spirituals of his youth. Hurt recorded 39 songs that day, pulling out his pocketknife for the slide effects in "Talking Casey Jones" and "Pera-Lee." Asked to play his favorite song, he launched into "Trouble I've Had It All My Days." Before quitting, Hurt said, "Let me do this one for you before we go. It's a love song, see?" John dedicated "Waiting For You" to his wife Jessie.

Mississippi John Hurt soon produced commercial recordings and, at age 69, gave his first major concert appearance at the Newport Folk Festival in July 1963. The lamb went over like a lion, graciously received his fans, and headed home to pick cotton for four dollars a day. A month later, he triumphed at the Philadelphia Folk Festival.

With his angelic, wizened face and diminutive size—5'4", without the old brown fedora—Mississippi John Hurt was as folkish and non-harrowing as his music, and he rapidly became a cultural hero. "Hurt wasn't just a good musician," noted Dick Spottswood, "he had something which was very important in the 1960s. He had old record credentials, and he had been a legend for years. The myth was accessible instantly, and he had the music to back it up." Rave reviews rolled in: "The most important rediscovered folk singer to come out of Mississippi's delta country, the traditional home of Negro country blues singers" described *Time*. *Down Beat* characterized him as "warm, gentle, wistful, quietly pulsant and wholly musical. The guitar work is stunningly complex." *The New York Times* praised his "compelling artistry" and added, "His performances have the quiet, introspective quality of chamber music."

Musicians who knew Mississippi John Hurt in the '60s often describe him as wise and gentle man. He was adaptable, living by his saying "When in Rome, do Rome." "John Hurt was very Christ-like and perfect," remembers Stefan Grossman, who studied guitar with him. "He had a repertoire of about 80 tunes, all of them gems. He was more of a songster than a blues musician, with a near-perfect guitar style. Onstage, he would rock back and forth with a little smile—very unlike someone like Son House. He was incredible, the storybook grandfather full of wise tales and wonderful stories." Then and now, countless guitarists have spent months trying to master John's so-called "effortless" fingerpicking. "To a beginner," Grossman continues, "John Hurt seems really simple. He's playing like a piano, with treble on top of a boom-chick, boom-chick bass. But when you dissect them, every one of his arrangements has something unique—he'll stop the bass, or the bass isn't where you'd expect it to be. He has unusual chord positions. He'd play set arrangements, but there would be little variations each time.

"The Newport Festival wanted to buy John Hurt a guitar, so he came up to Marc Silber's Fretted Instrument Shop. We showed him a Martin OO-42, expensive guitars with pearl inlays. And he just went for a simple Guild guitar that he picked off the wall. It was nothing special, not even a great-sounding guitar. It was very modest, just like he was. For his studio sessions on Vanguard, he used my OM-45 Martin, which happened to be an incredible sounding guitar. You can hear the difference between those recordings and the live Vanguard album that he did with the Guild."

In September 1963 John, Jessie, and grandchildren Ella Mae and Andrew Lee moved to Washington, D.C. Between concert appearances around the country, John worked as resident guitarist at the Ontario Place coffee house. His take-home jumped tenfold from his sharecropping wage to $200 a week. He recorded Piedmont's

Volume One Of A Legacy and *Worried Blues* during the spring of '63 (both have been released by Rounder Records). Hurt's July reappearance at Newport was released by Vanguard. He taped the label's two-album *The Best Of Mississippi John Hurt* in concert at Oberlin College on April 15, 1965.

When his bookings and albums brought him enough revenue to buy a house in Grenada, Hurt packed up his guitar and headed for Mississippi. "By rights," Jessie insisted, "John went into this when he ought've been coming out." Mississippi John Hurt paid his final visit to New York City during the summer of '66, cutting for Vanguard. "He got uncomfortable with people fighting to control his recording," Grossman details, "so he went back home and died in his sleep. He came in gently, left gently." Hurt passed away on November 2, 1966, and was buried a few miles north of A.R. Perkins' house in Carroll County.

An excerpt from Jas Obrecht's Early Blues: The Music Before Robert Johnson
Copyright 1992. Used by permission.

Photo by J. Robert Mantler

Explanation of the Tab/Music System

".....Learning from listening is unquestionably the best way, the only way that suits this kind of music. You are setting the notes down for a record of what happened, a record that can be studied, preserved and so on, a necessary and useful companion to the recordings of the actual sounds. I keep thinking of this as I transcribe; if you could do it, it would be good to have a legend across each page reading: "Listen to the record if you want to learn the song."

Hally Wood (taken from the Publisher's Foreword to the New Lost City Ramblers Songbook.)

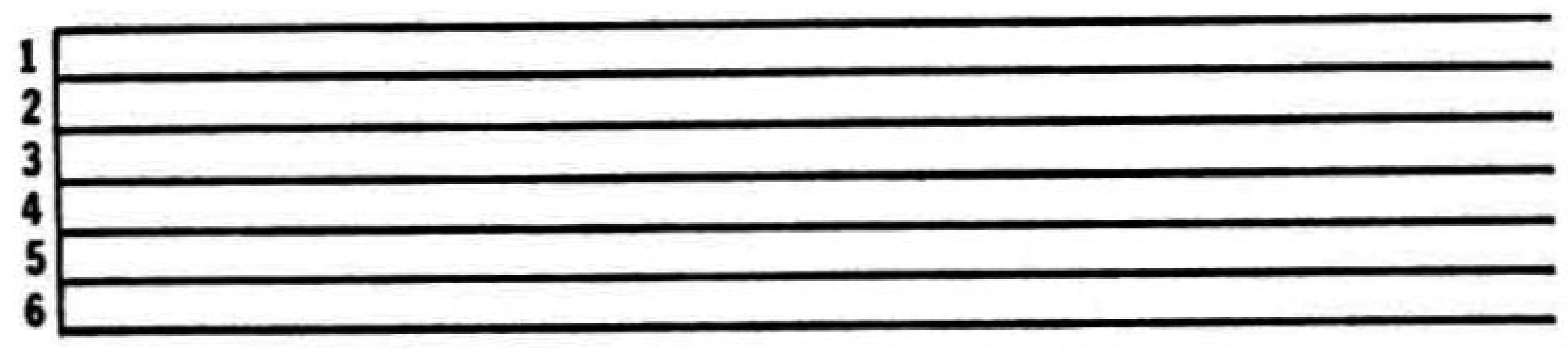
Copyright © 1965 Oak Publications.
All Rights Reserved. Used by Permission.

These words are most suitable for introducing the tablature system, for tablature is just a guide and should be used in conjunction with the recordings. Tablature is not like music notation, however the combination of tab and music in an arrangement forms a complete language. Used together and with the original recordings they give a total picture of the music.

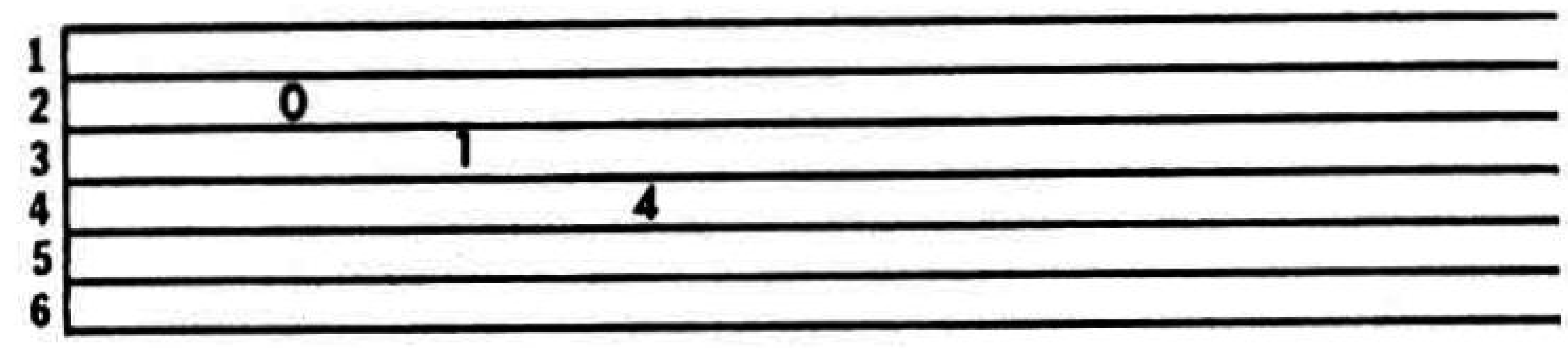
The tab system does not attempt to show rhythms or accents. These can be found on the music or heard on the recordings. Music notation tackles these articulations to a degree, but the overall sensations, the feel and the soul of music cannot be wholly captured on the written page. In the words of the great Sufi Hazrat Inayat Khan: ".....The traditional ancient songs of India composed by great Masters have been handed down from father to son. The way music is taught is different from the Western way. It is not always written, but is taught by imitation. The teacher sings and the pupil imitates and the intricacies and subtleties are learned by imitation."

This is the theme I've tried to interpolate into the tablature. Tablature is the roadmap and you are the driver. Now to the tab:

Each space indicates a string. The top space represents the first string, second space the second string, etc. A zero means an open string, a number in the space indicates the fretted position for instance a 1 in a space indicates the first fret of that string.

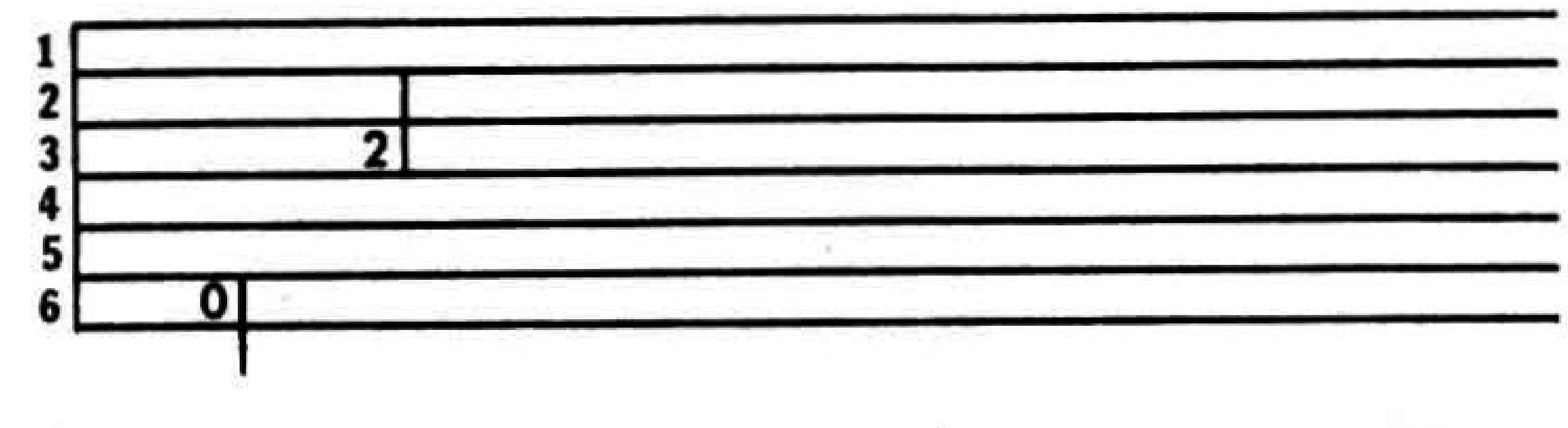


In the diagram below the zero is on the second string and indicates the open second string is played. The 1 is placed on the third string's space and signifies the first fret of the third string. Likewise, the 4 is in the fourth space and indicates the fourth fret of the fourth string.



Generally for fingerpicking styles you will be playing the thumb, index and middle fingers of your picking hand. To indicate the picking finger in tab the stems go up and line up down from the numbers:

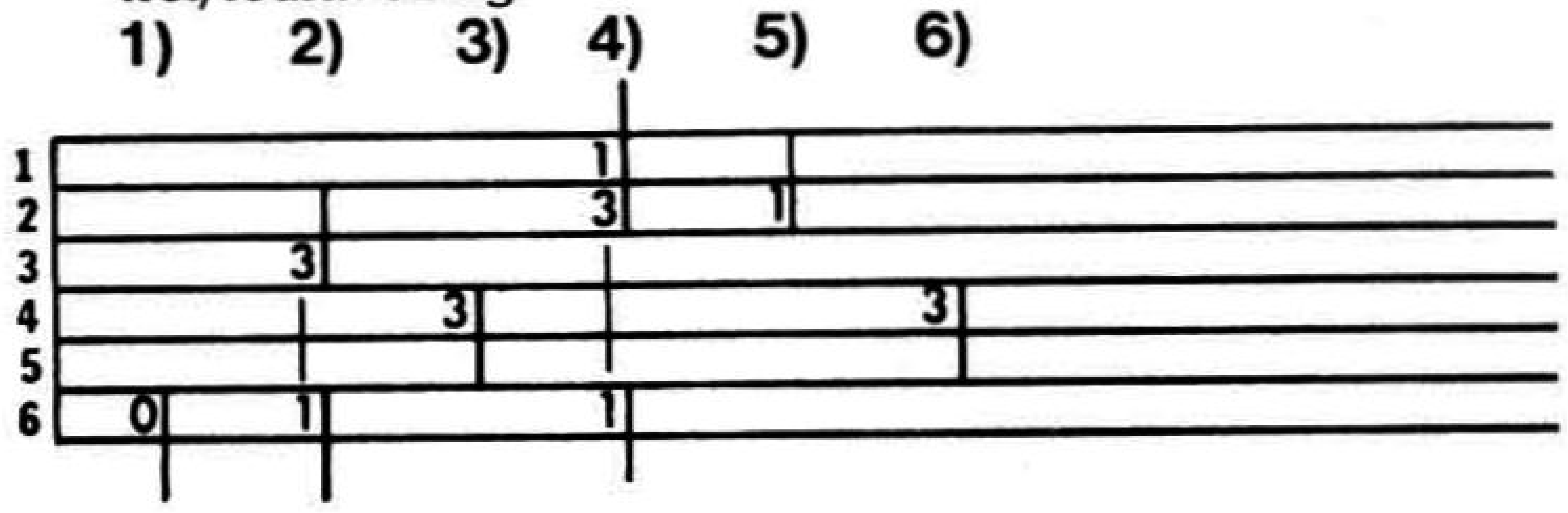
- A. A stem down means that your thumb strikes the note.
- B. If a stem is up, your index or middle finger strikes the note. The choice of finger is left up to you, as your fingers will dictate what is most comfortable, especially when playing a song up to tempo!
- C. The diagram below shows an open sixth string played with the thumb followed by second fret of the third string played with the index or middle finger:



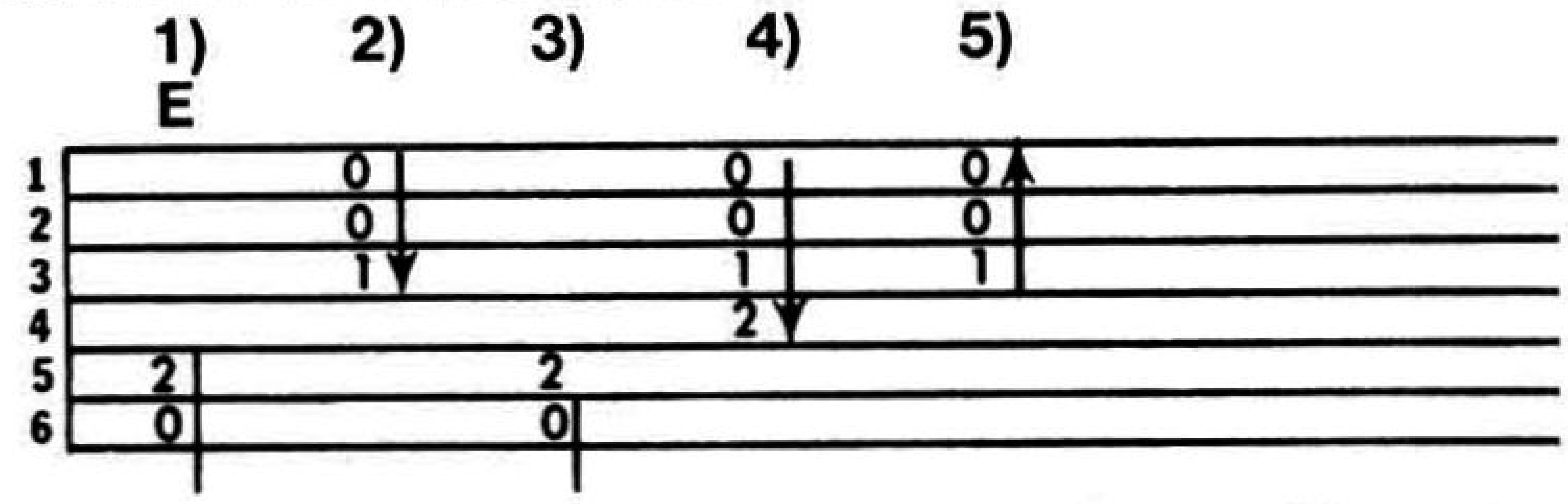
In most cases the thumb will play an alternating bass pattern, usually on the bass strings. The index and middle fingers play melodic notes on the first, second and third strings. Please remember, this is not a rule; there are many exceptions.

In fingerpicking there are two "picking" styles: Regular picking and "pinching" two notes together. A pinch is shown in the tab by a line connecting two notes. A variation of this can also be two treble notes pinched with a bass note. Follow the example below from left to right:

1) The open sixth string is played with the thumb.
2) The first fret of the sixth string is pinched together with the third fret of the third string. The sixth string is played with the thumb, the third string with the index finger.
3) The thumb strikes the third fret of the fourth string.
4) The first fret/sixth string is played with the thumb; it's pinched with two notes in the treble. The index and middle fingers strike the first fret/first string and the third fret/second string.
5) The next note is the index finger hitting the first fret/second string.
6) Lastly, the bass note is played with the thumb on the third fret/fourth string.



There are certain places in blues and contemporary guitar that call for the use of either strumming techniques or accented bass notes. The tab illustrates these as follows:



1) The thumb hits the open sixth string and the second fret on the fifth string should also sound. For example, play an E chord. Now strike the open sixth string and vary the force of your attack. Try hitting it hard enough so that the fifth string vibrates as well. This technique is very important for developing a full sound and the right alternating bass sound.

2) Next the arrow notation indicates a brush and the arrowhead indicates the direction of the brush.

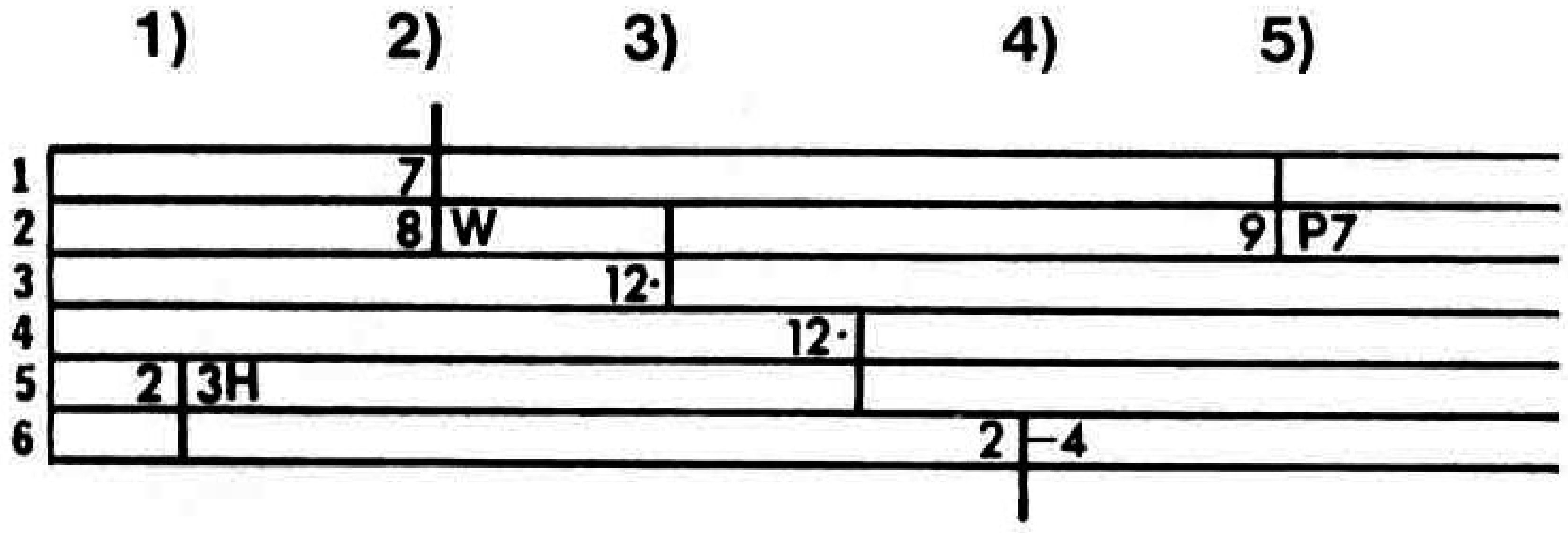
   - A. If the arrowhead is pointed down, the hand brushes up toward the sixth string.
   - B. If pointed up, the hand brushes down toward the first string.
   - C. The number of strings to be played by the brush is shown by the length of the arrow. For example, this arrow shows a brush up toward the sixth string, but indicates to strike only the first, second and third strings.
   - D. The brush can be done with your whole hand, index finger or middle and ring finger. Let comfort plus a full and "right" sound guide your choice.

3) The third set of notes again shows the sixth string/open bass note played with the thumb and being struck hard enough to make the fifth string/second fretted position sound.

4) Once more an arrow pointed downward indicates a brush up. This example forms an E chord and the brush up includes the first, second, third and fourth strings.

5) The last set of notes has an arrow pointed upward, indicating a brush downward striking the first, second and third strings.

Here are several special effects that are also symbolized in tablature:



1) HAMMER-ON: Designated by an "H" which is placed after the stem on the fret to be hammered. In the example above, fret the second fret/fifth string and pick it with your thumb. Then "hammer-on" (hit hard) the third fret/fifth string i.e. fret the third fret/fifth string. This is an all-in-one, continuous motion which will produce two notes rapidly with one picking finger strike.

2) WHAM: Designated by a "W". In the example the eighth fret/second string is "whammed" and played with the seventh fret/first string. Both notes are played together with your index and middle fingers respectively. The whammed note is "stretched." We do this by literally bending the note up. We can "wham" the note up a half tone; full tone etc.

3) HARMONICS: Symbolized by a dot (.). To play a harmonic: gently lay your finger directly above the indicated fret (don't press down!). The two notes in the example are both harmonics, The first on the twelfth fret/third string is played with the index/middle finger, while the second note-twlfth fret/fourth string - is played with the thumb.

4) SLIDE: Shown with a dash (-). Play the second fret/sixth string and then slide up to the fourth fret of the sixth string. This is a continuous movement; the string is struck once with your thumb.

5) PULL-OFF: "P" designates a "pull-off." Fret both the seventh and ninth frets on the second string. Play the ninth fret with your index/middle finger and then quickly remove it in the same stroke, leaving the seventh fret/second string. Pull-offs are generally in a downward direction.

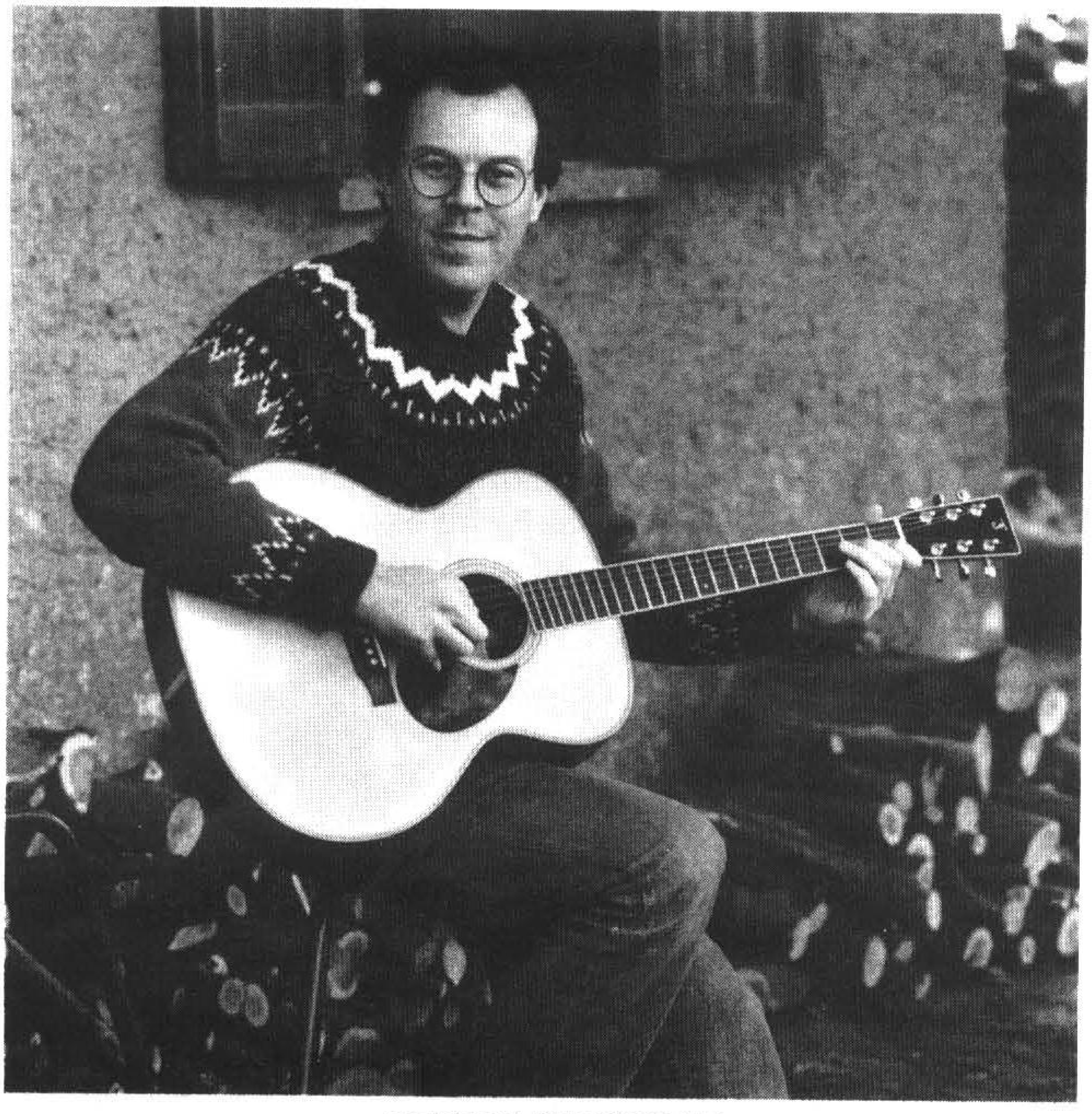
6) In certain cases use other specific symbols are added to the tab, for instance:
   A. For ARTIFICIAL HARMONICS an "X" is placed after the fretted position.
   B. For SNAPPING a note an indication may be given with a symbol or the written word.

Many times these special techniques are combined, for instance putting a pull-off and a hammer-on together. Coordination of your fretting and picking hands will be complex initially, but the end results are exciting and fun to play.

PICKING HAND POSITION FOR FINGERPICKING STYLES: The Classical and Flamenco schools have strict right-hand rules, however for this style of acoustic fingerpicking there are NO RULES, only suggestions. Your right hand position should be dictated by comfort, however in observation of many well-known fingerpickers I found one hand position similarity — they all tend to rest their little finger and/or ring finger on the face of the guitar. This seems to help their balance for accenting notes and control of the guitar. Experiment with this position; it may feel uncomfortable at first. I ask my students to perfect this position and then compare the sound to when their finger(s) were not placed on the face of the guitar. They usually find the sound is greatly improved when some contact is kept with the guitar face.

MUSIC NOTATION: We have somewhat adapted the music notation in that this also shows whether the note is picked with your thumb or index/middle fingers. The stems of the music notes correspond to the direction of the tab stems. I hope this will make the music notation clearer to fingerpicking guitarists.

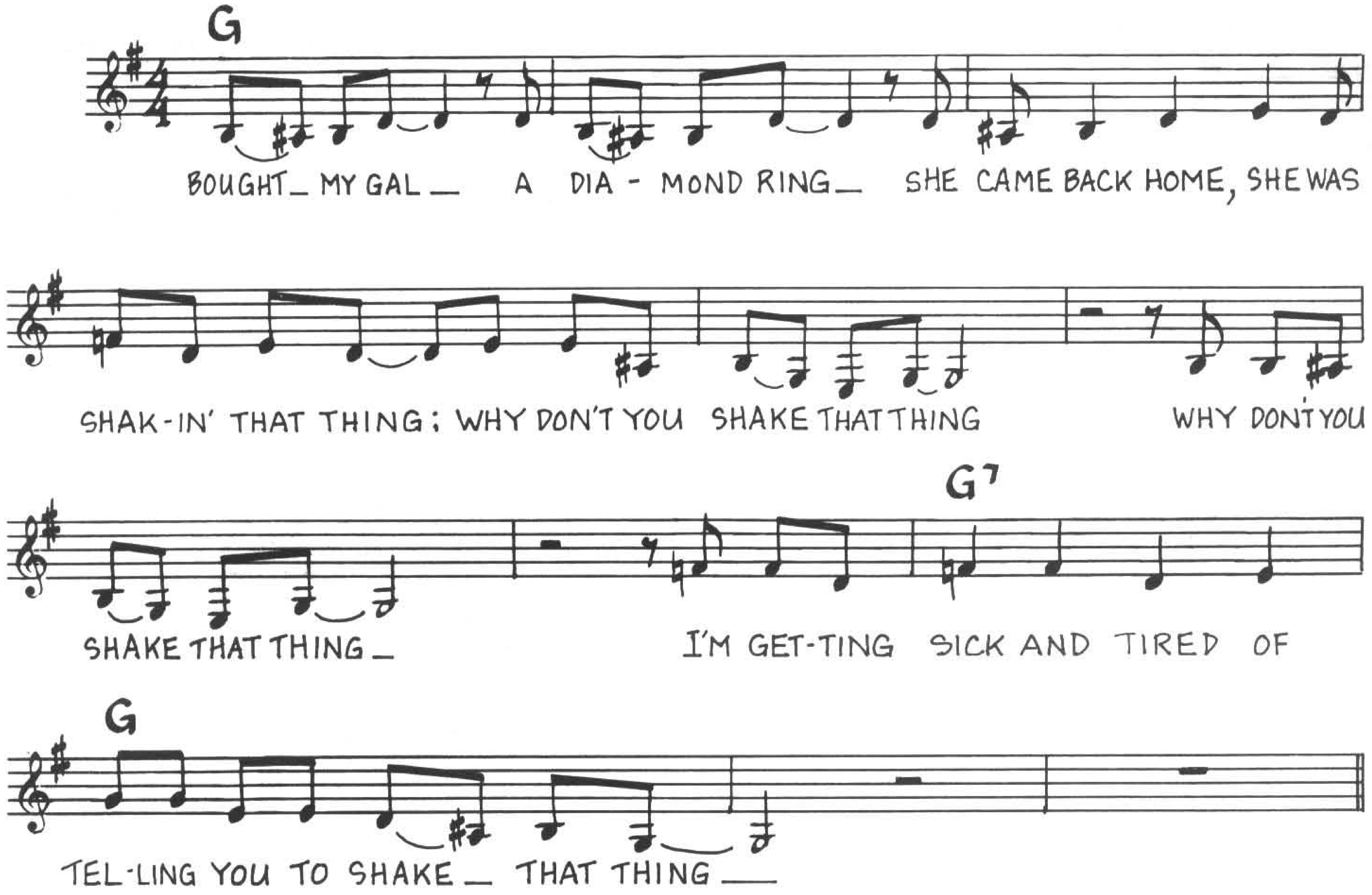
I hope you will feel at home and comfortable with the tablature and musical notations. Remember, these are only road maps indicating where and how you should place your fingers. The playing and musical interpretation is up to you.



STEFAN GROSSMAN

SHAKE THAT THING

trad.arr. John Hurt


G
BOUGHT_ MY GAL_ A DIA - MOND RING_ SHE CAME BACK HOME, SHE WAS
SHAK-IN' THAT THING; WHY DON'T YOU SHAKE THAT THING WHY DON'T YOU
SHAKE THAT THING_
G⁷
I'M GET-TING SICK AND TIRED OF
G
TEL-LING YOU TO SHAKE_ THAT THING_

Copyright Control

SHAKE THAT THING

Mississippi John Hurt never recorded this song on a commercial record. He did sing it at my home with the following verse:
Bought my gal, a diamond ring.
She came back home, she was shakin' that thing.
Why don't you shake that thing.
Why don't you shake that thing.
I'm getting sick and tired of telling you to shake that thing.

SHAKE THAT THING was made very popular in 1925 by Papa Charlie Jackson Here are some of Papa Charlie's lyrics:
Now down in Georgia, they got a dance that's new.
There ain't nothing to it, it's easy to do.
They call it "Shake That Thing".
Call it "Shake That Thing".
I'm getting sick and tired, of telling you to shake that thing.

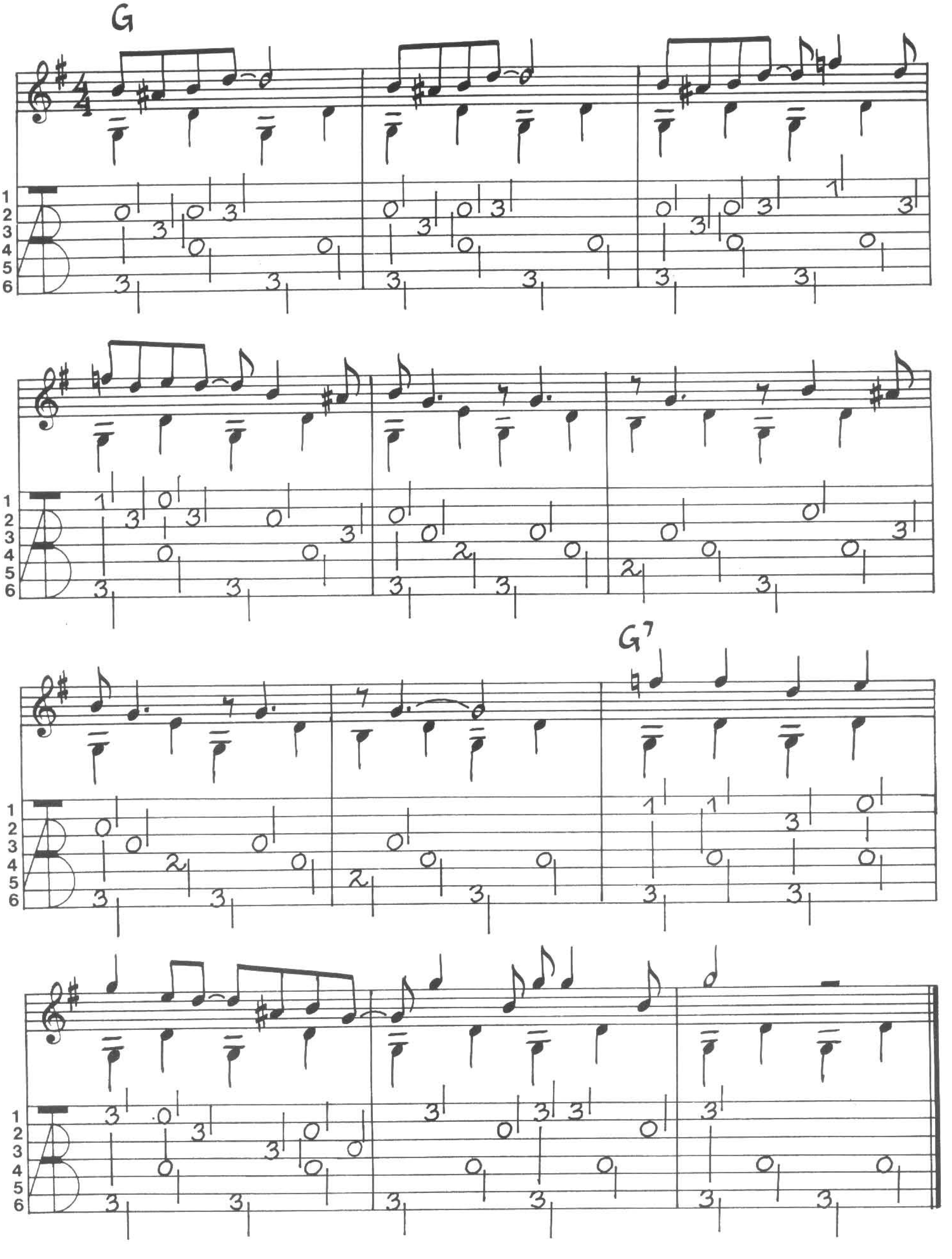
Now it ain't no "Chocolate", ain't no "Pigeon Wing",
All you got to do, is shake that thing.
They call it "Shake That Thing".
Call it "Shake That Thing".
I'm getting sick and tired, of telling you to shake that thing.

Now the old folks like it, the young folks too.
The old folks showing the young folks how to do.
They call it "Shake That Thing".
Call it "Shake That Thing".
I'm getting sick and tired, of telling you to shake that thing.

Now get back children, and Dina too.
Let the men show you, just how to do.
You're gonna shake that thing.
Oh shake that thing.
I'm getting sick and tired, of telling you to shake that thing.

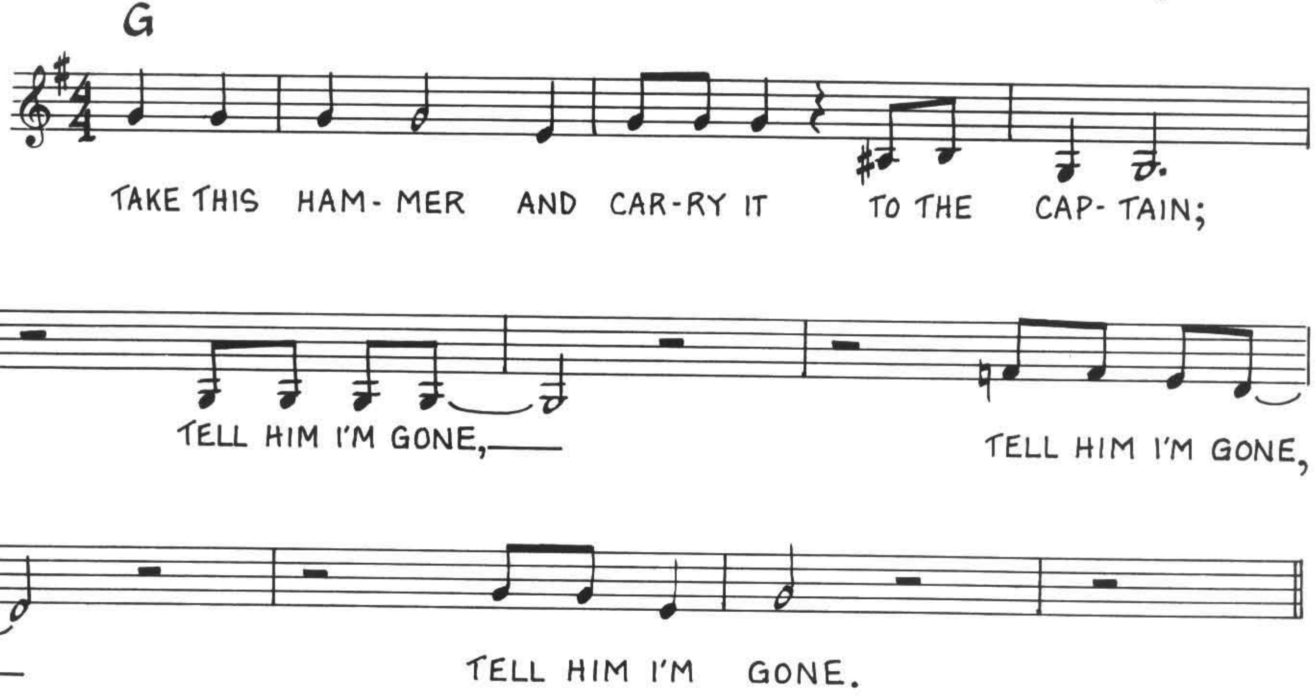
I was walking downtown, and stumbled and fell.
My mouth fell open like a country well.
Why don't you shake that thing.
Oh, why do you shake that thing.
I'm getting sick and tired, of telling you to shake that thing.

SHAKE THAT THING



SPIKE DRIVER'S BLUES

by John Hurt


G
TAKE THIS HAM- MER AND CAR-RY IT TO THE CAP- TAIN;
TELL HIM I'M GONE,
TELL HIM I'M GONE,
TELL HIM I'M GONE.

John Henry was a steel-drivin' man,
Oh, he went down, yes, he went down.

John Henry, he had a little wife,
Name was Polly Anne, name was Polly Anne.

John Henry took sick in the bed,
She drove steel like a man, drove steel like a man

I walked here all the way from east Colorado,
Baby that's my home, honey, that's my home.

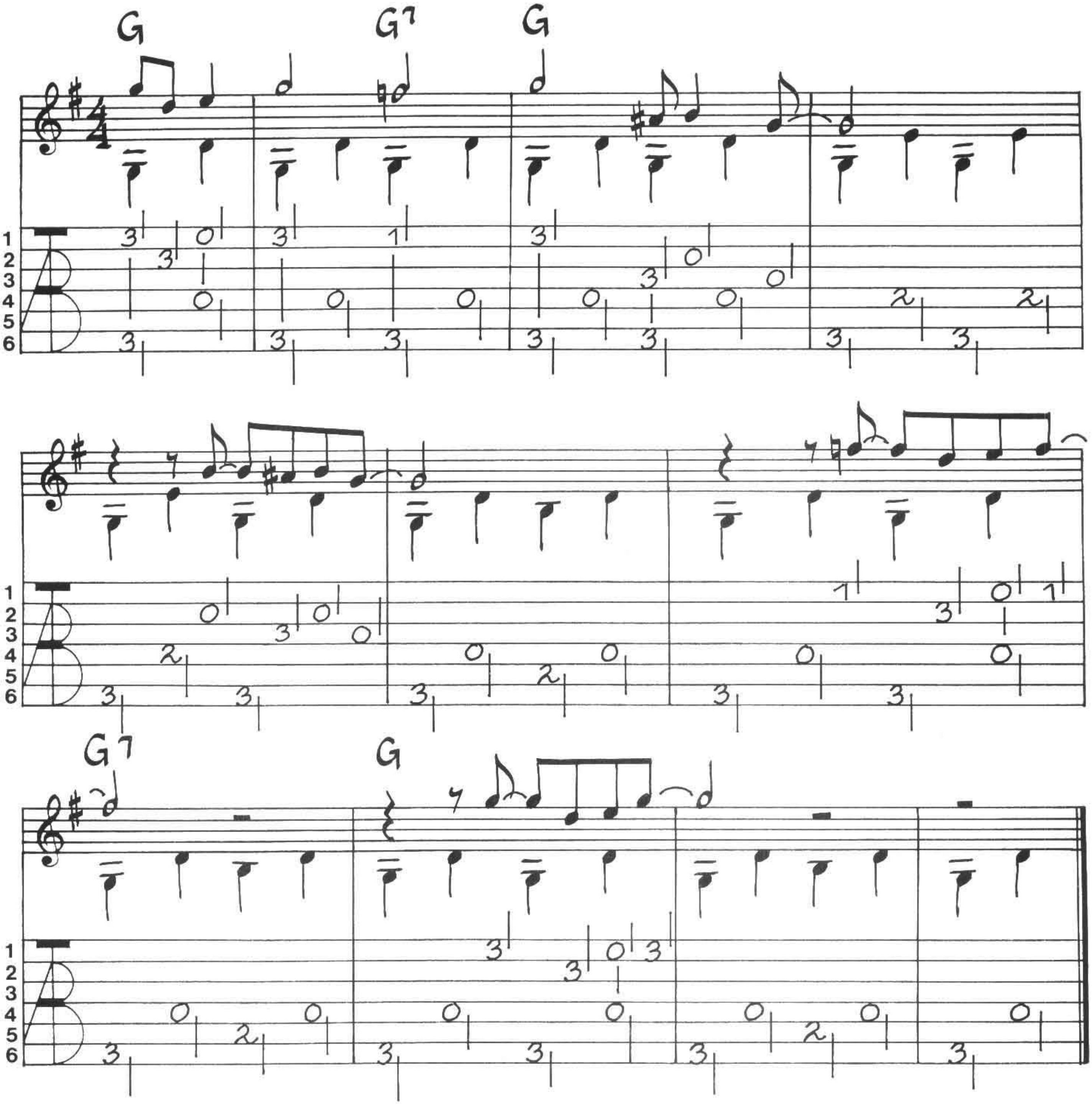
You can take this hammer and carry it to my captain,
Oh, tell him I'm gone, won't you tell him I'm gone?

John Henry, he left his hammer
Layin' 'side the road, layin' 'side the road.

John Henry, he left his hammer,
All painted in red, all painted in red.

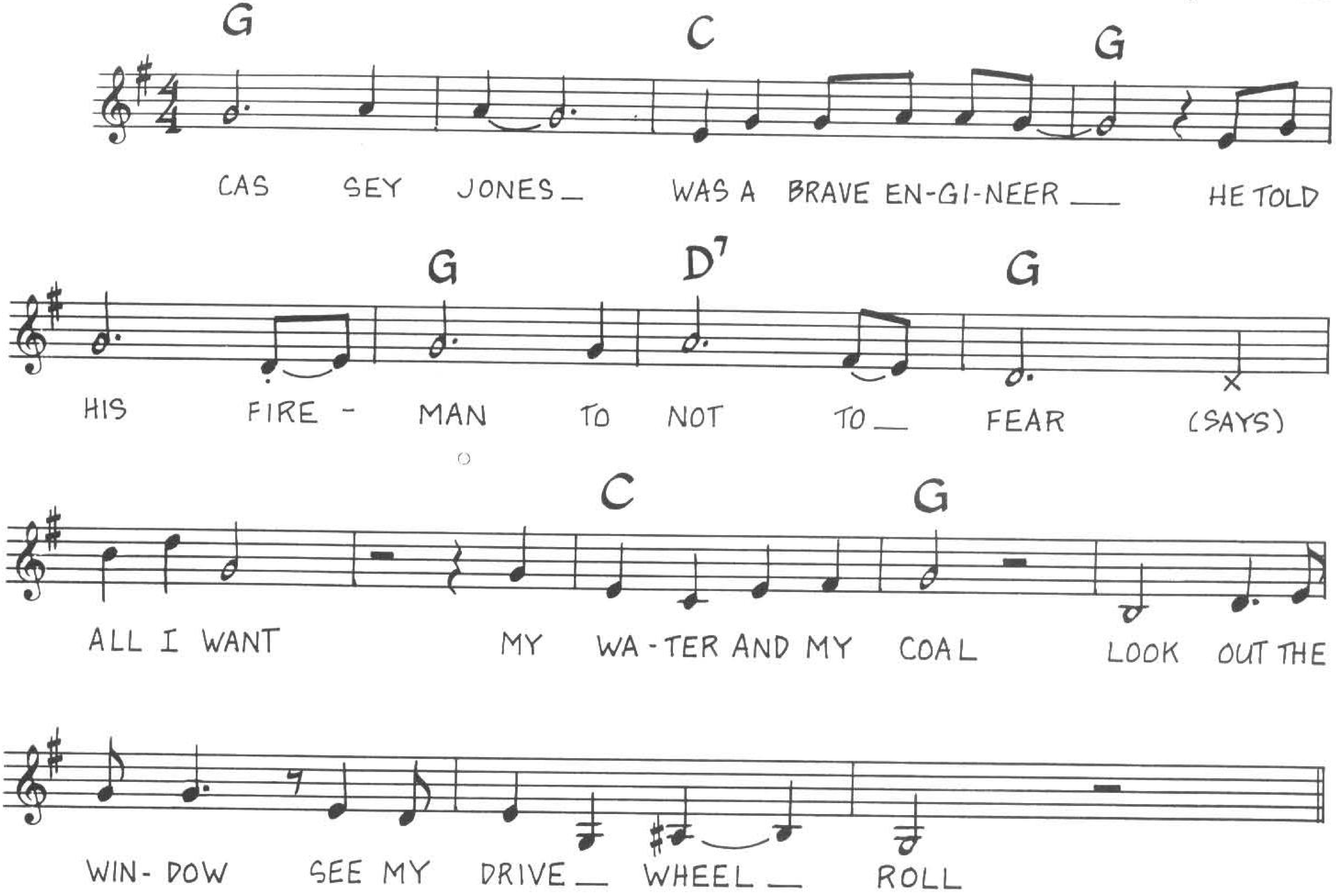
You just take this hammer and carry it to my captain,
Oh, tell him I'm gone, won't you tell him I'm gone?

SPIKE DRIVER'S BLUES



CASEY JONES

by John Hurt


G
C
G
CAS SEY JONES_ WAS A BRAVE EN-GI-NEER ___ HE TOLD
G
D7
G
HIS FIRE - MAN TO NOT TO_ FEAR (SAYS)
C
G
ALL I WANT MY WA-TER AND MY COAL LOOK OUT THE
WIN- DOW SEE MY DRIVE_ WHEEL_ ROLL

CASEY JONES

Casey Jones was a brave engineer,
He told his fireman to not to fear.
Says, “All I want, my water and my coal.
Look out the window, see my drive wheel roll.”

Early one mornin’ came a shower rain,
’Round the curve I seen a passenger train.
In the cabin was Casey Jones,
He’s a noble engineerman but he’s dead and gone.

“Children, children, get your hat.”
“Mama, mama, what you mean by that?”
“Get your hat, put it on your head,
Go down in town, see if your daddy’s dead.”

“Mama, mama, how can it be?
My daddy got killed on the old I.C.”†
“Hush your mouth and hold your breath,
You’re gonna draw a pension after your daddy’s dead.”

Casey’s wife, she got the news,
She was sittin’ on the bedside, she was lacin’ up her shoes.'
I said, “Go away, children, and hold your breath,
You're gonna draw a pension after your daddy’s dead.”

Casey said, before he died,
“Fixed the blinds so the bums can’t ride.
If they ride, let ’em ride the rod,
Trust they lives in the hands of God.”

Casey said again, before he died,
One more road that he wanted to ride.
People wondered what road could that be?
The Gulf Colorado and the Santa Fe.

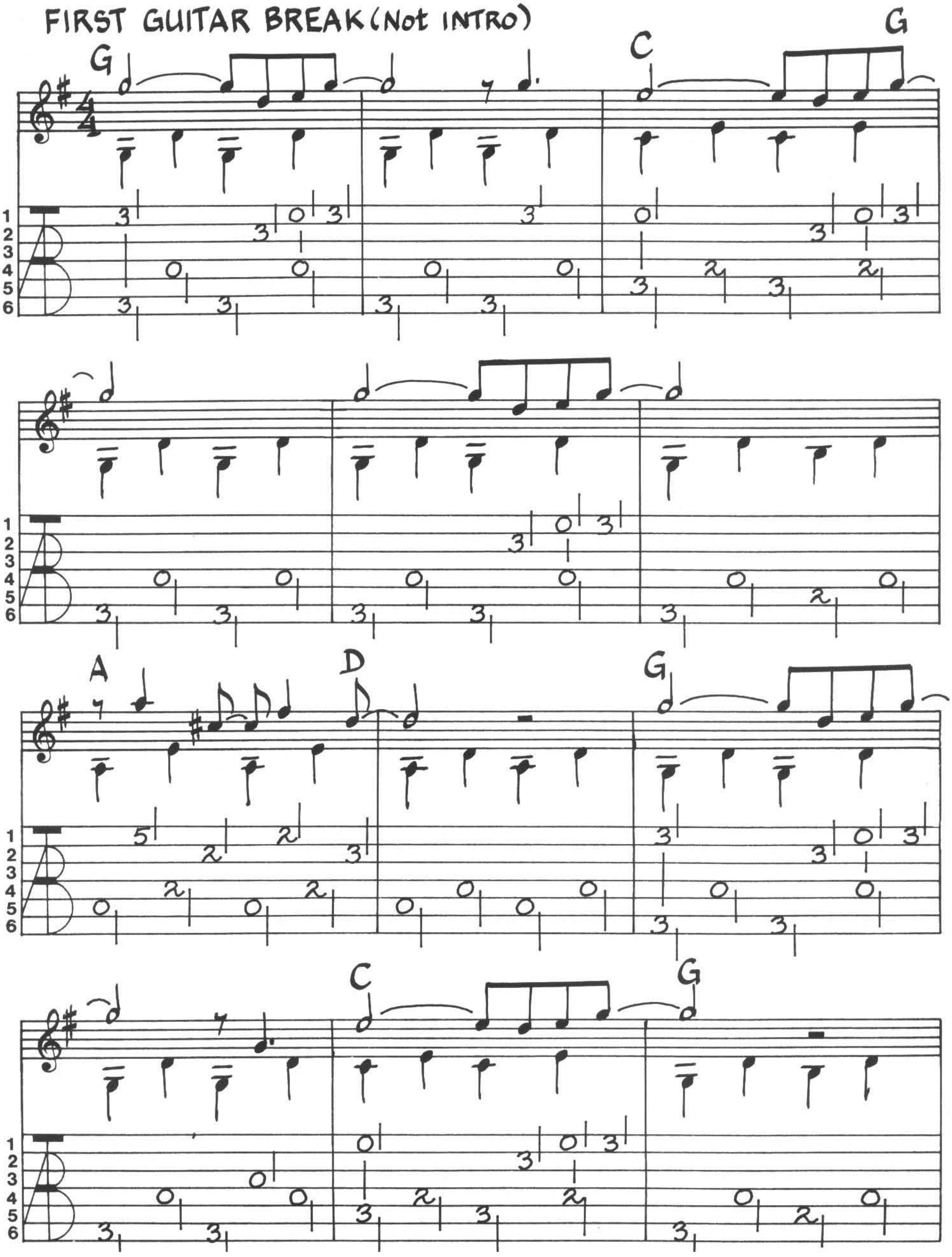
Casey Jones was a noble engineer,
He told his fireman to not, toot to fear.
Says, “All I want, my water and my coal,
Look out the window, see my drive wheel roll.”

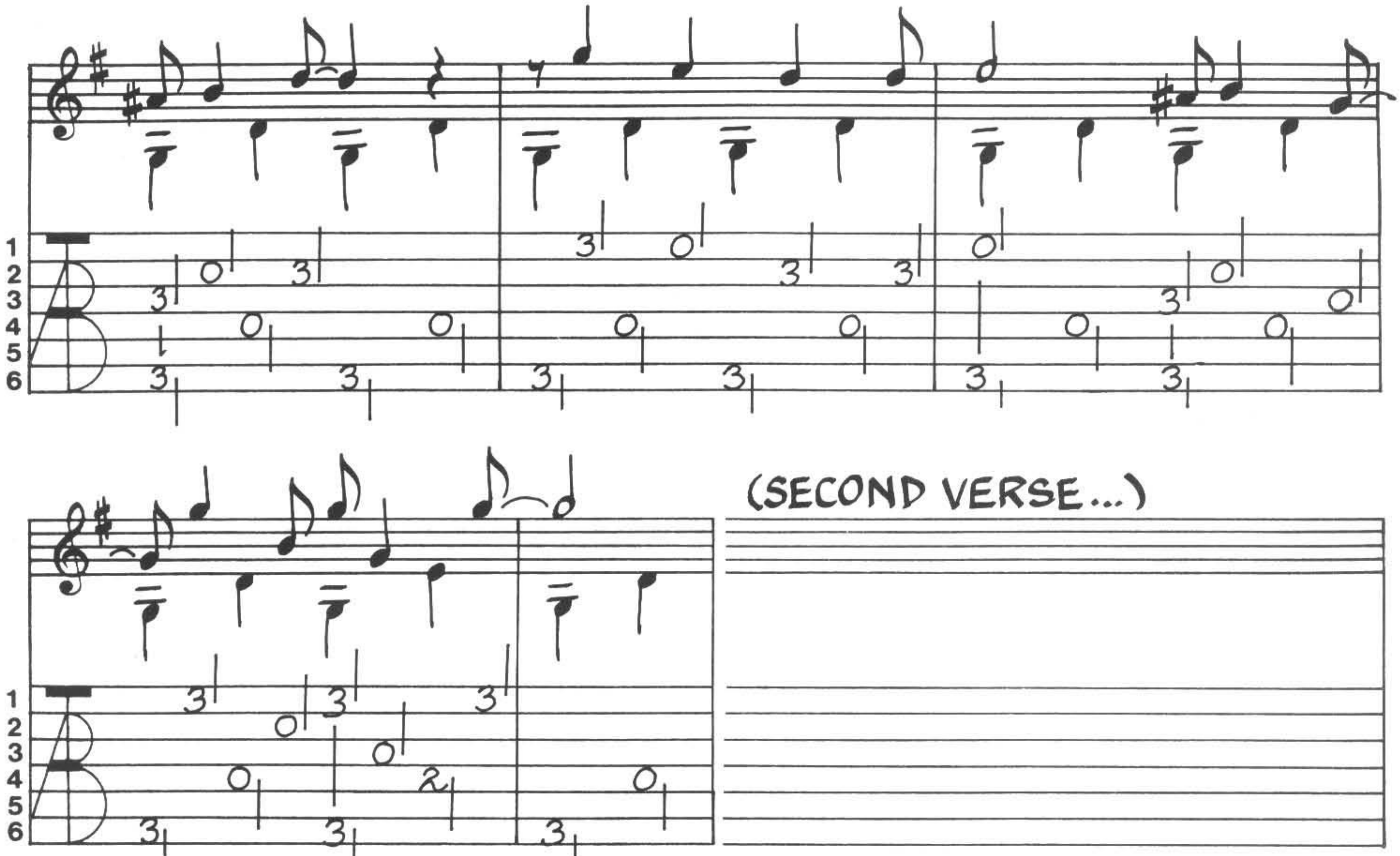
* According to folklorists, the real-life Jones crashed to death in 1900 en route to Canton, Mississippi. Nine years later, the famous ballad (to which this version is musically unrelated) became a pop standard.

†*I.C.:* Illinois Central line.

CASEY JONES

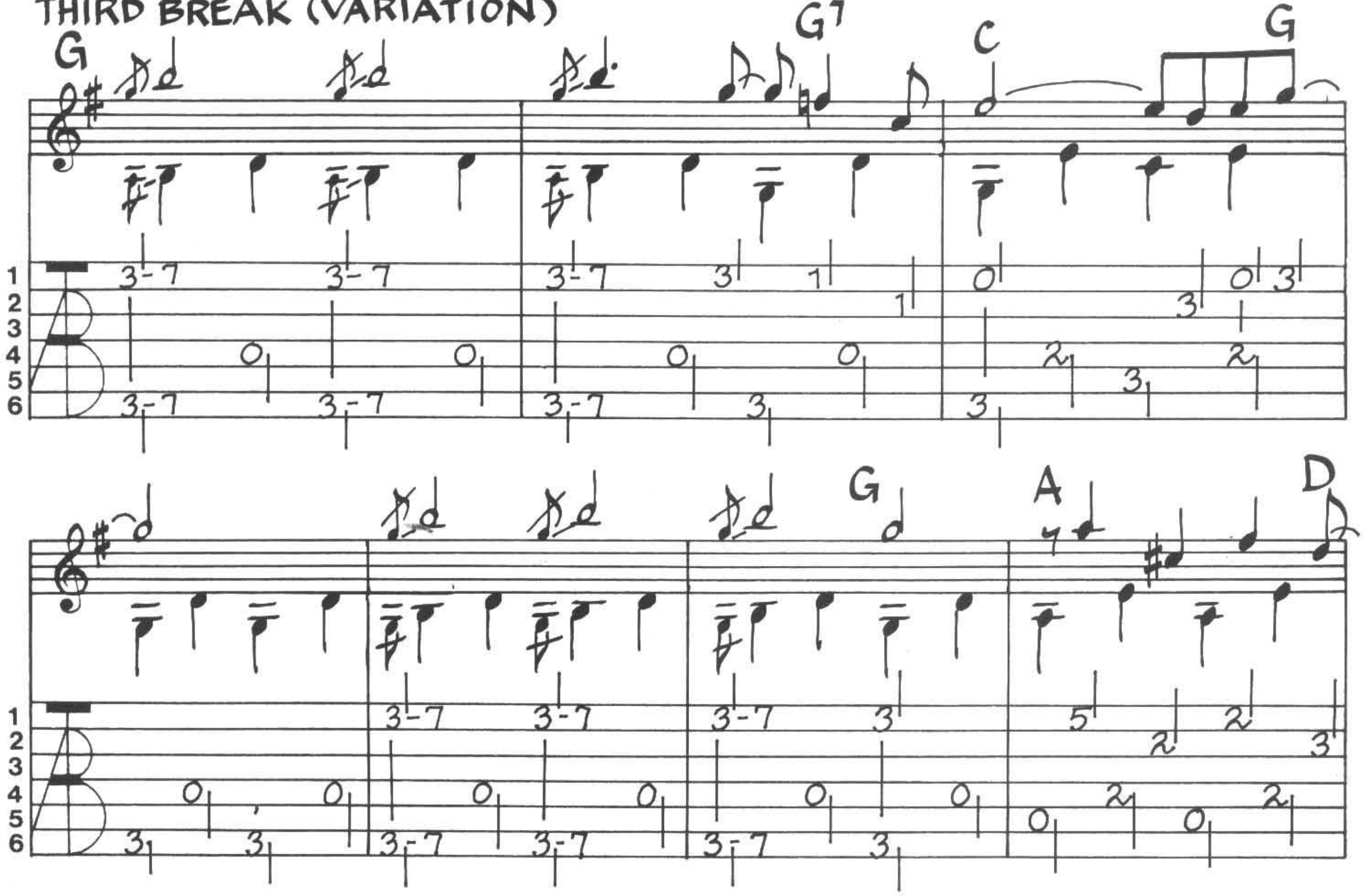
FIRST GUITAR BREAK (Not INTRO)

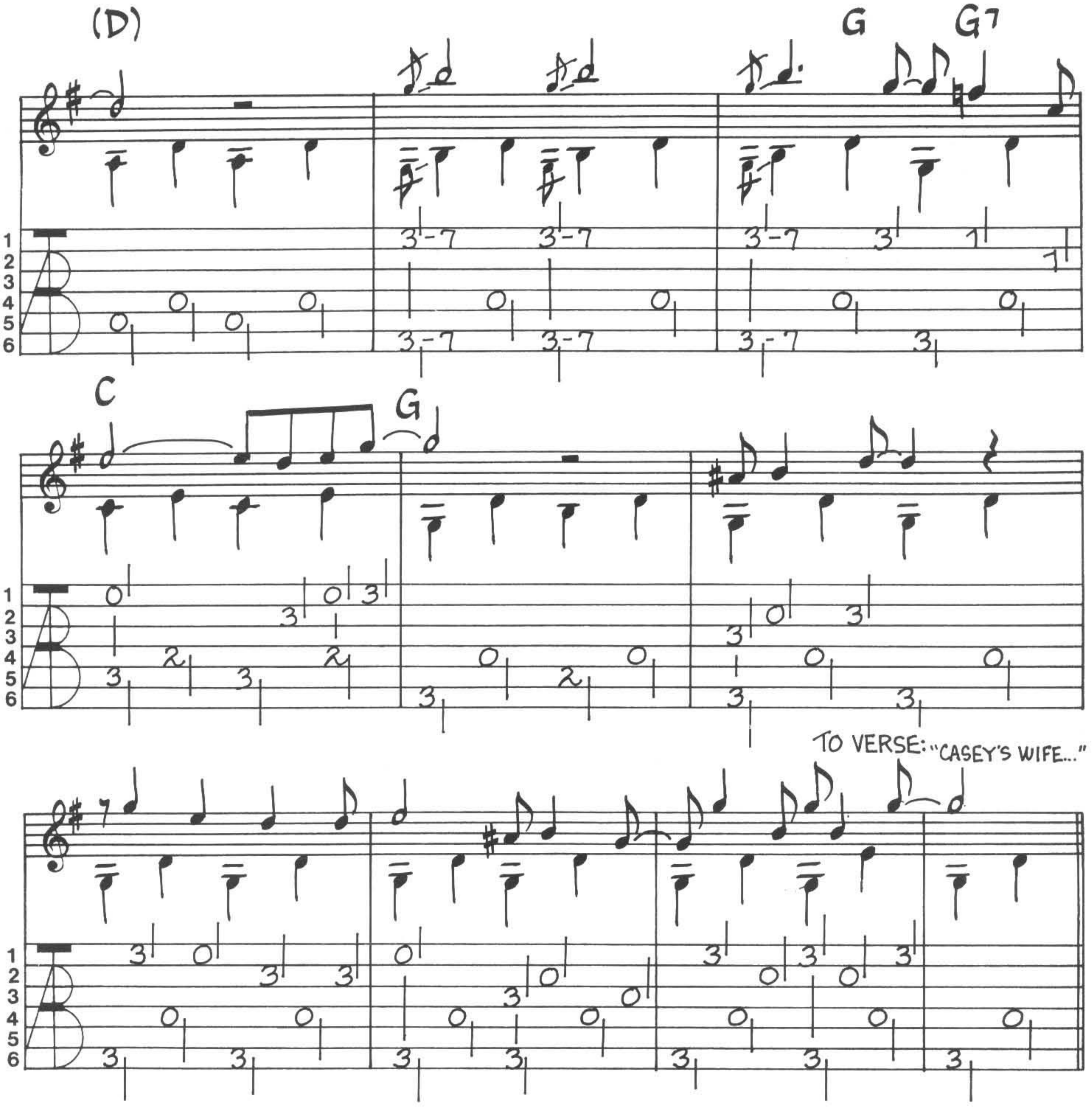




(SECOND VERSE...)

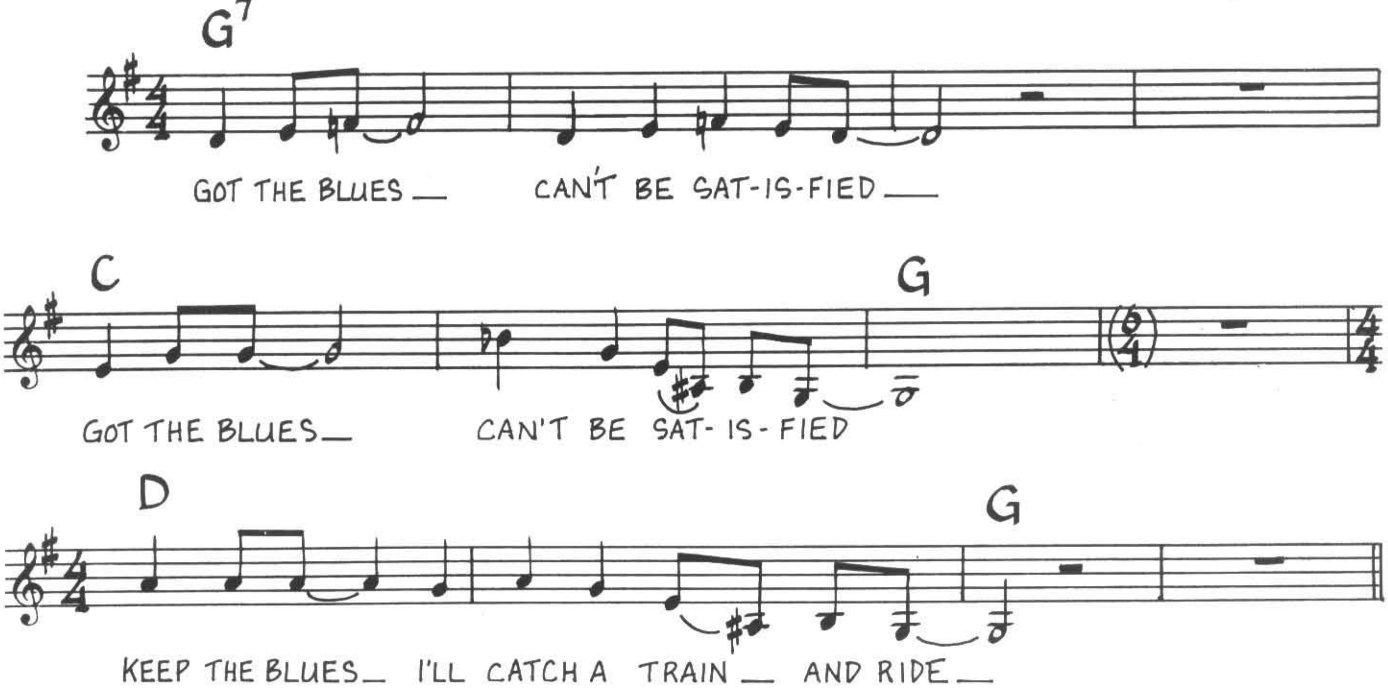
THIRD BREAK (VARIATION)




(D)
G
G7
C
G
TO VERSE: "CASEY'S WIFE..."

GOT THE BLUES, CAN'T BE SATISFIED

by John Hurt


G7
GOT THE BLUES — CAN'T BE SAT-IS-FIED —
C
G
GOT THE BLUES — CAN'T BE SAT- IS - FIED
D
G
KEEP THE BLUES — I'LL CATCH A TRAIN — AND RIDE —

I've got the blues an' I can't be satisfied,
Got the blues . . .
Well, some old day, gonna catch the train and ride.

Yes, whiskey straight will drive the blues away,
Whiskey straight will drive the blues away,
That be the case, I wants a quart today.

I bought my baby a great big diamond ring,
Bought my baby . . .
Come right back home and caught her shakin' that thing.*

I said, "Babe, what make you do me this a-way?
Baby, what make you . . .
Well, that I bought, now you give it away."

I took my gun and I broke the barrel down,
Took my gun . . .
I put that joker six feet in the ground.

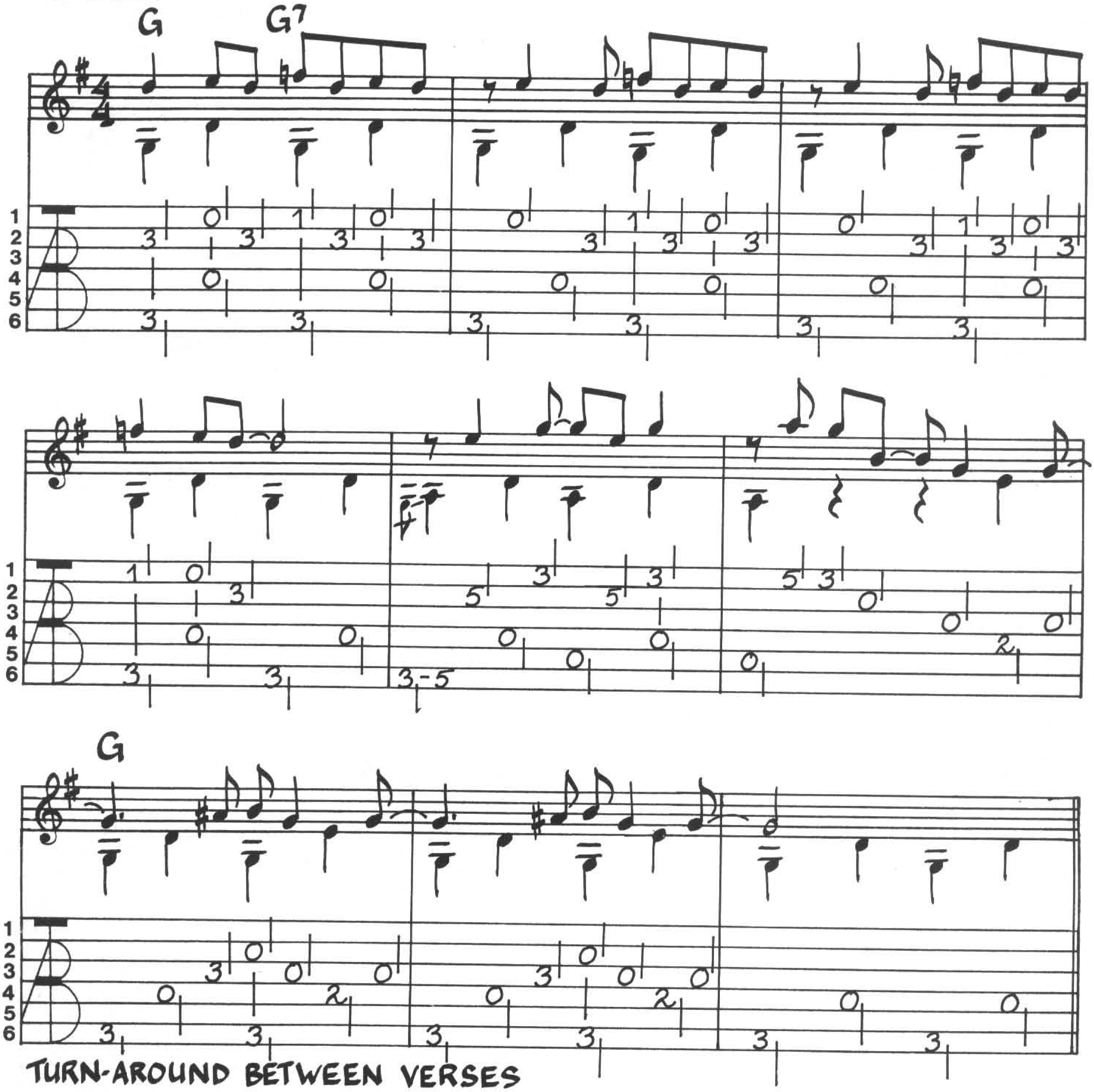
Yet got the blues and I still ain't satisfied,
You got the blues . . .
Well, some old day, gonna catch the train and ride.

---

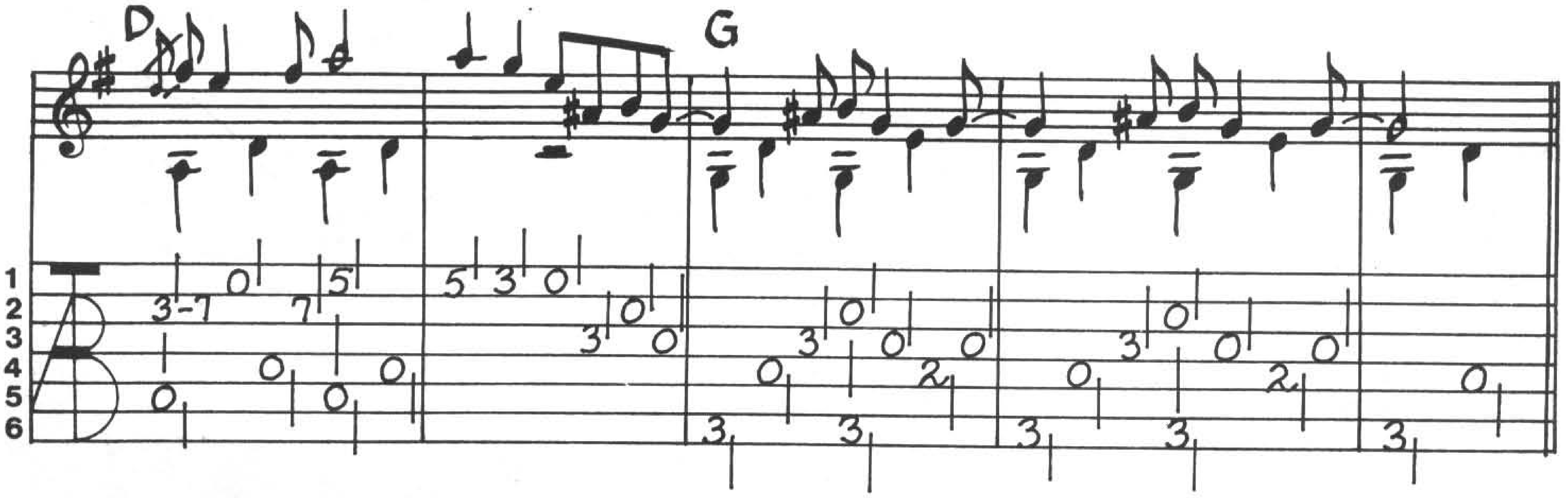
* *shakin' that thing:* blues euphemism for engaging in sex, popularized by Papa Charlie Jackson's 1925 hit "Shake That Thing."

GOT THE BLUES, CAN'T BE SATISFIED

GUITAR SOLO

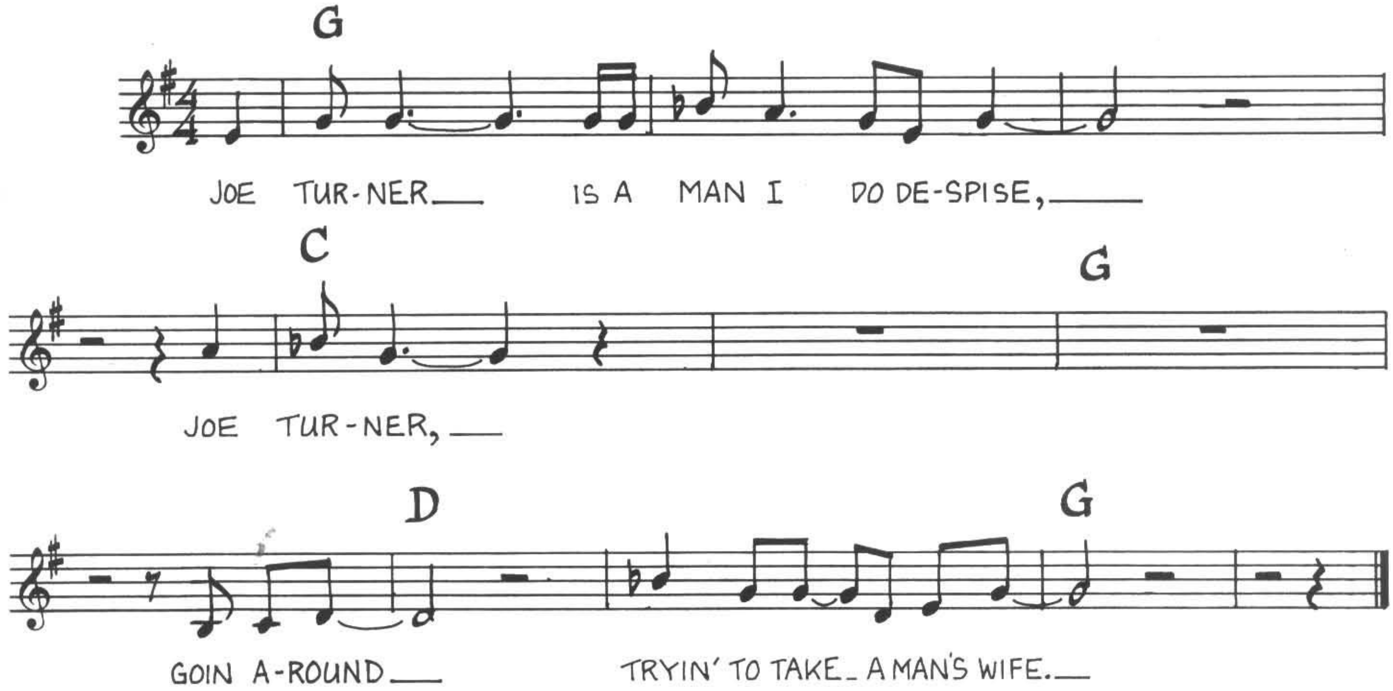


TURN-AROUND BETWEEN VERSES



JOE TURNER BLUES

by John Hurt


G
JOE TUR-NER__ IS A MAN I DO DE-SPISE,___
C
G
JOE TUR-NER,__
D
G
GOIN A-ROUND__ TRYIN' TO TAKE_ A MAN'S WIFE.__

Joe Turner is a man I do despise.
Joe Turner...
Goin' around, trying to take a man's wife.

Joe Turner, drove him from my door.
Joe Turner, drove him from my door.
All because, that he won't come back no more.

Listen policeman, you'd better not let him around.
Policeman, you'd better not let him around.
If you do, I'm sure goin' shot him down.

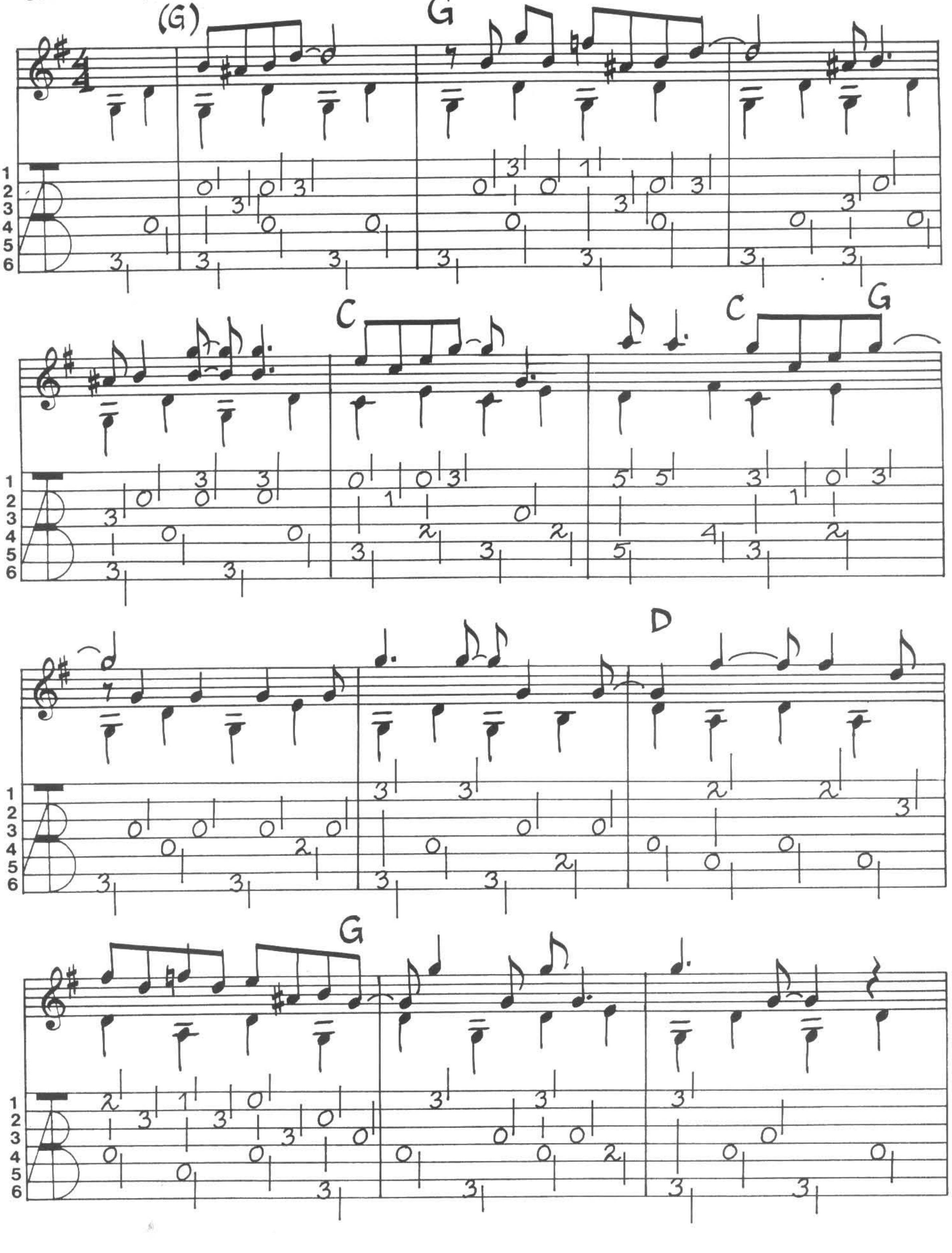
Joe Turner, a man I do despise.
Joe Turner, a man I do despise.
Goin' around, trying to take a man's wife.

I left Joe Turner, standing in my door.
I left Joe Turner...
He may steal, my good girl oughta know.

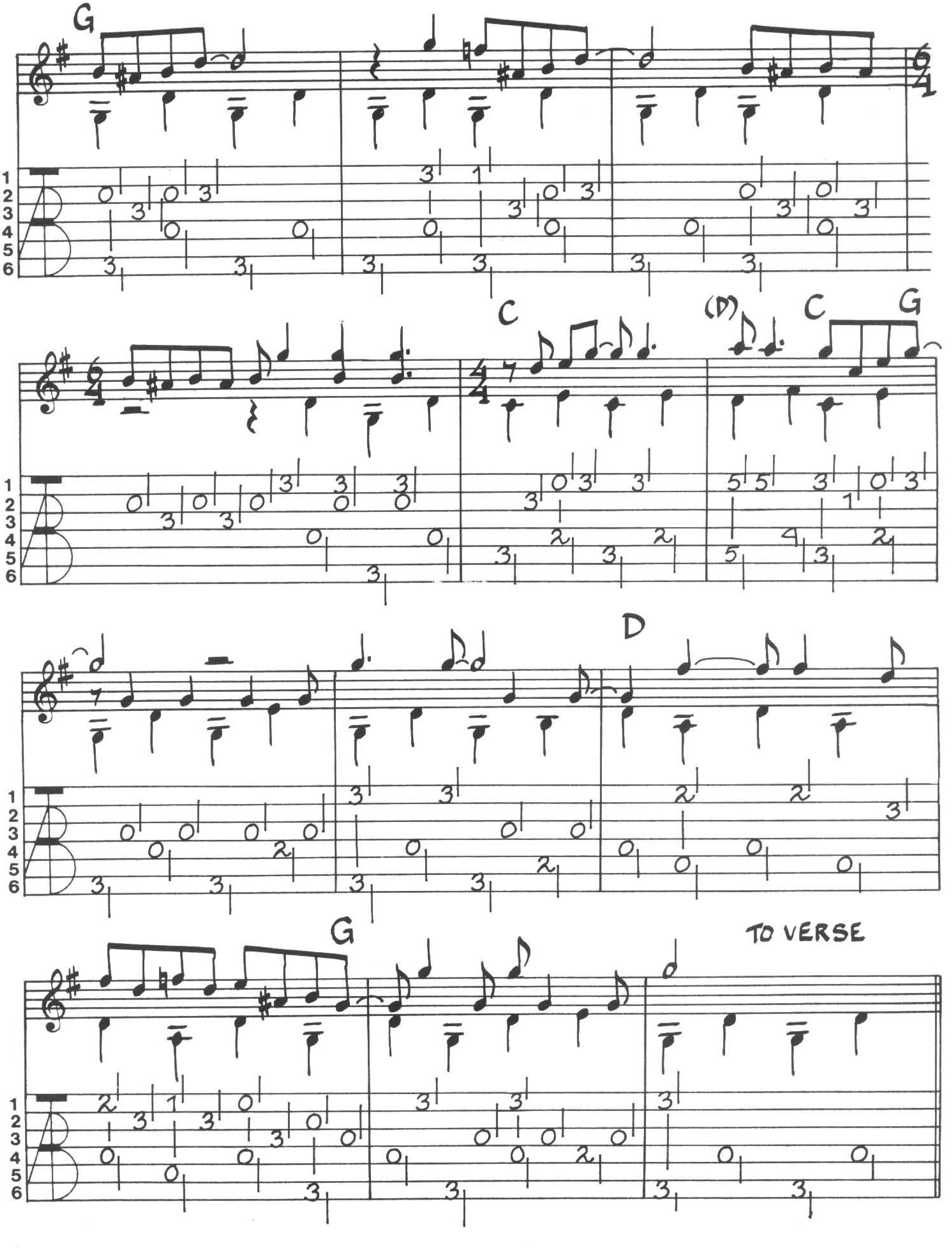
Joe Turner, I drove him from my door.
I drove Joe Turner, I drove him from my door.
Maybe steal, my good girl all I know.

JOE TURNER BLUES

GUITAR INTRO

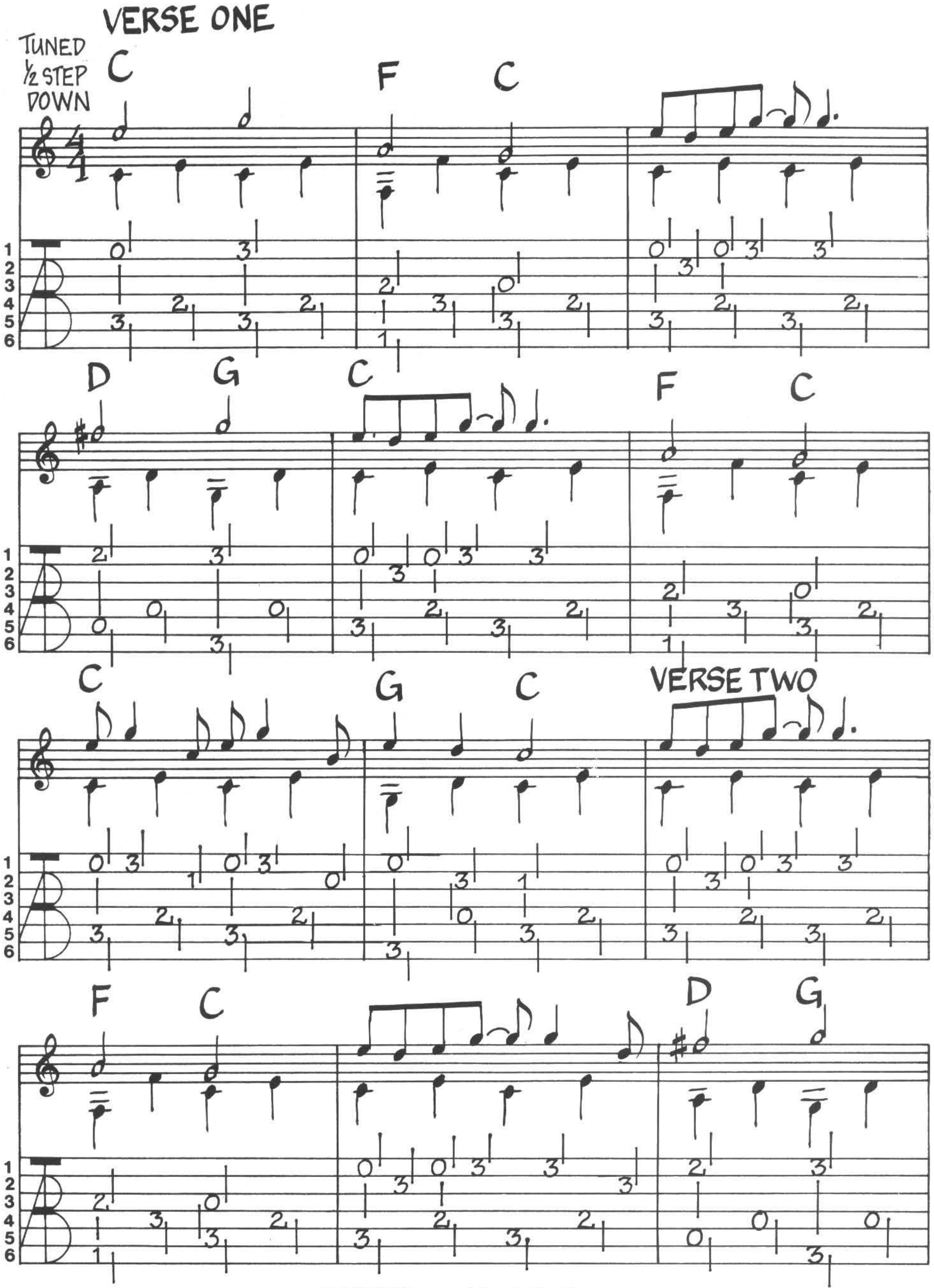


SECOND TIME THROUGH


G
C
(D)
C
G
D
G
TO VERSE

STOCKTIME

by John Hurt


VERSE ONE
TUNED ½ STEP DOWN
C
F
C
D
G
C
F
C
C
G
C
VERSE TWO
F
C
D
G

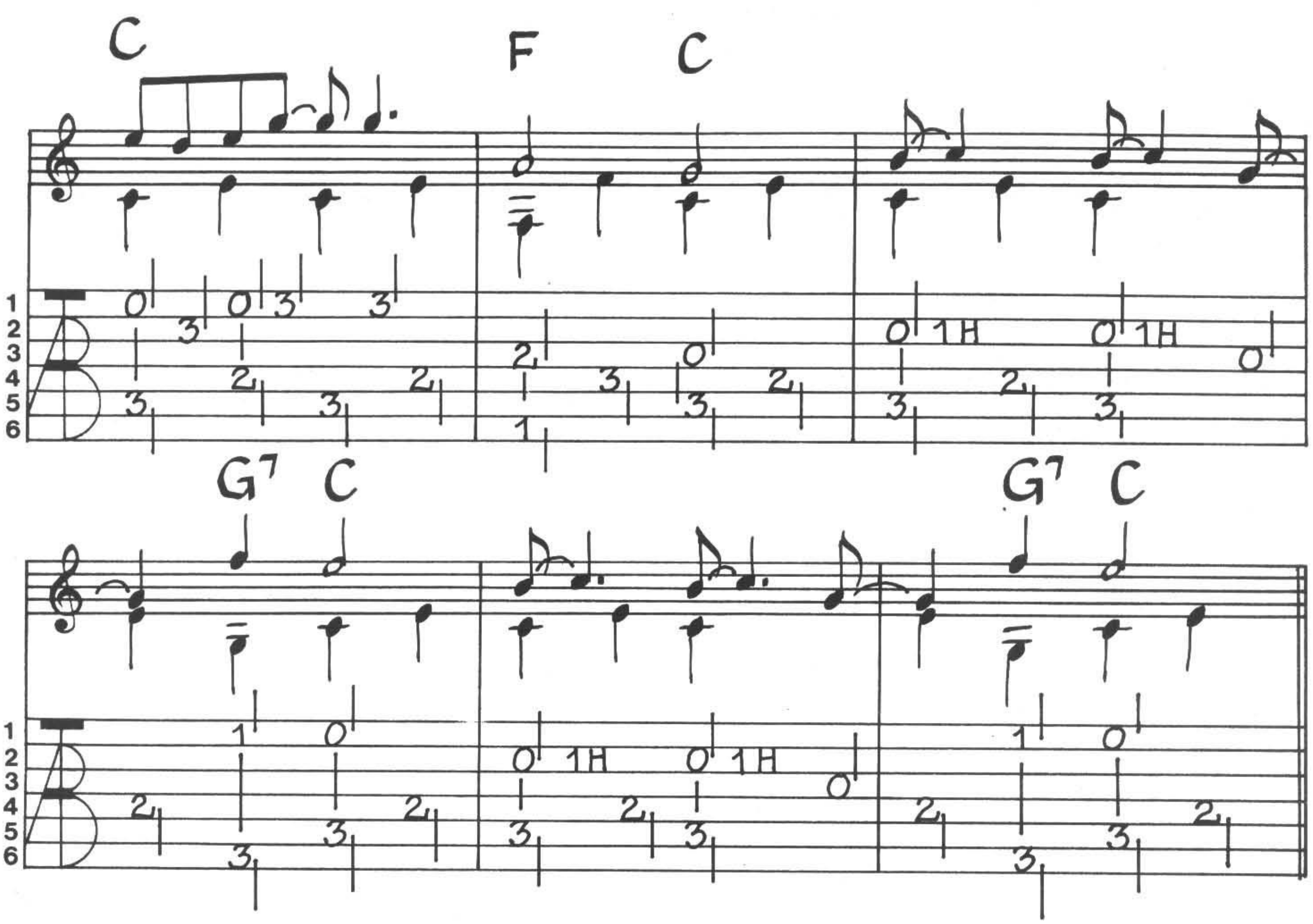
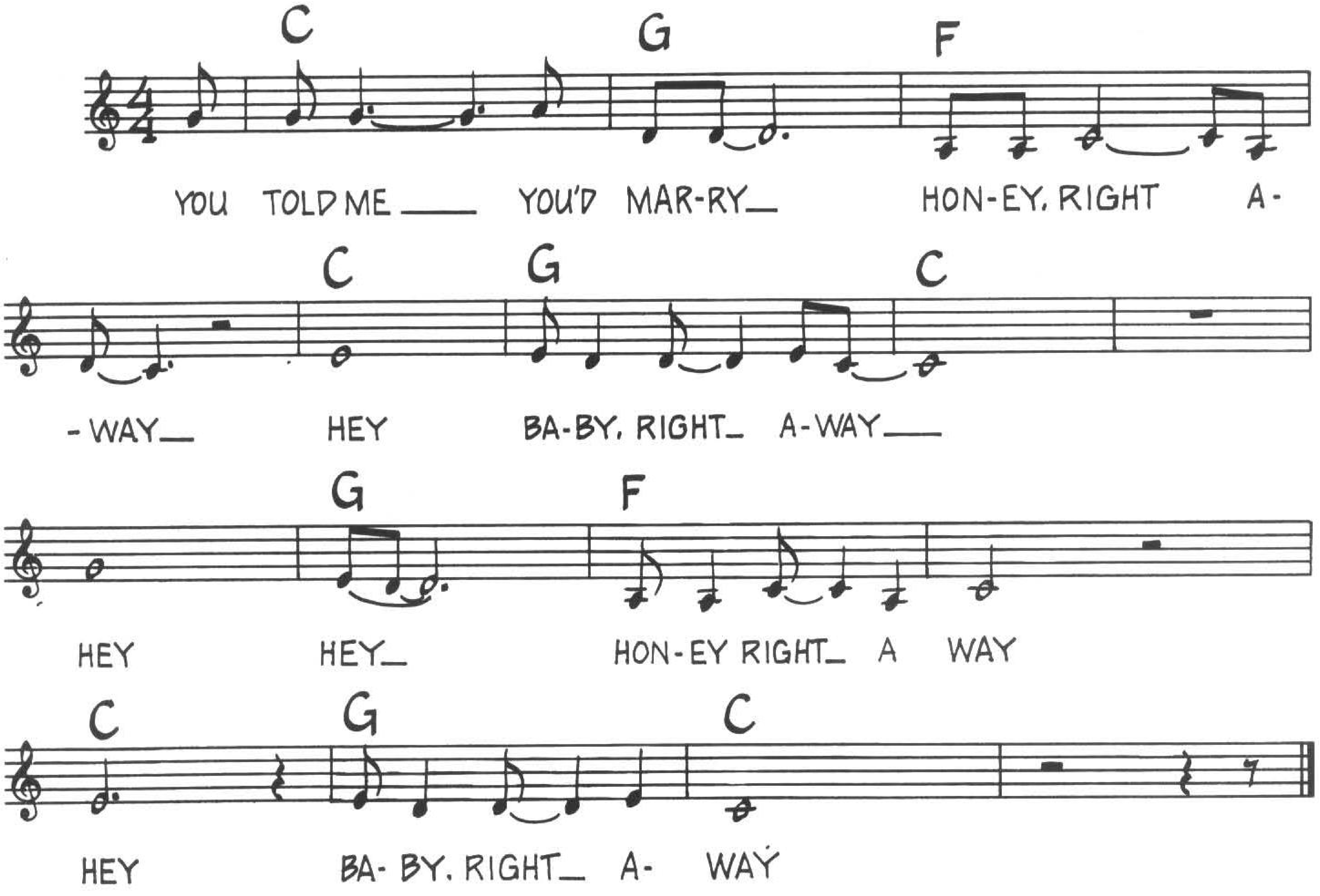


Photo by Tom Hoskins

HEY BABY, RIGHT AWAY

by John Hurt


C
G
F
YOU TOLD ME ___ YOU'D MAR-RY_ HON-EY, RIGHT A-
C
G
C
-WAY_ HEY BA-BY, RIGHT_ A-WAY___
G
F
HEY HEY_ HON-EY RIGHT_ A WAY
C
G
C
HEY BA-BY, RIGHT_ A- WAY

1. Hey, hey, honey right away,
   Hey, honey right away
   Right away, baby right away,
   Hey, honey right away.

2. You told me, you'd marry,
   Honey, right away.
   Hey, baby, right away.

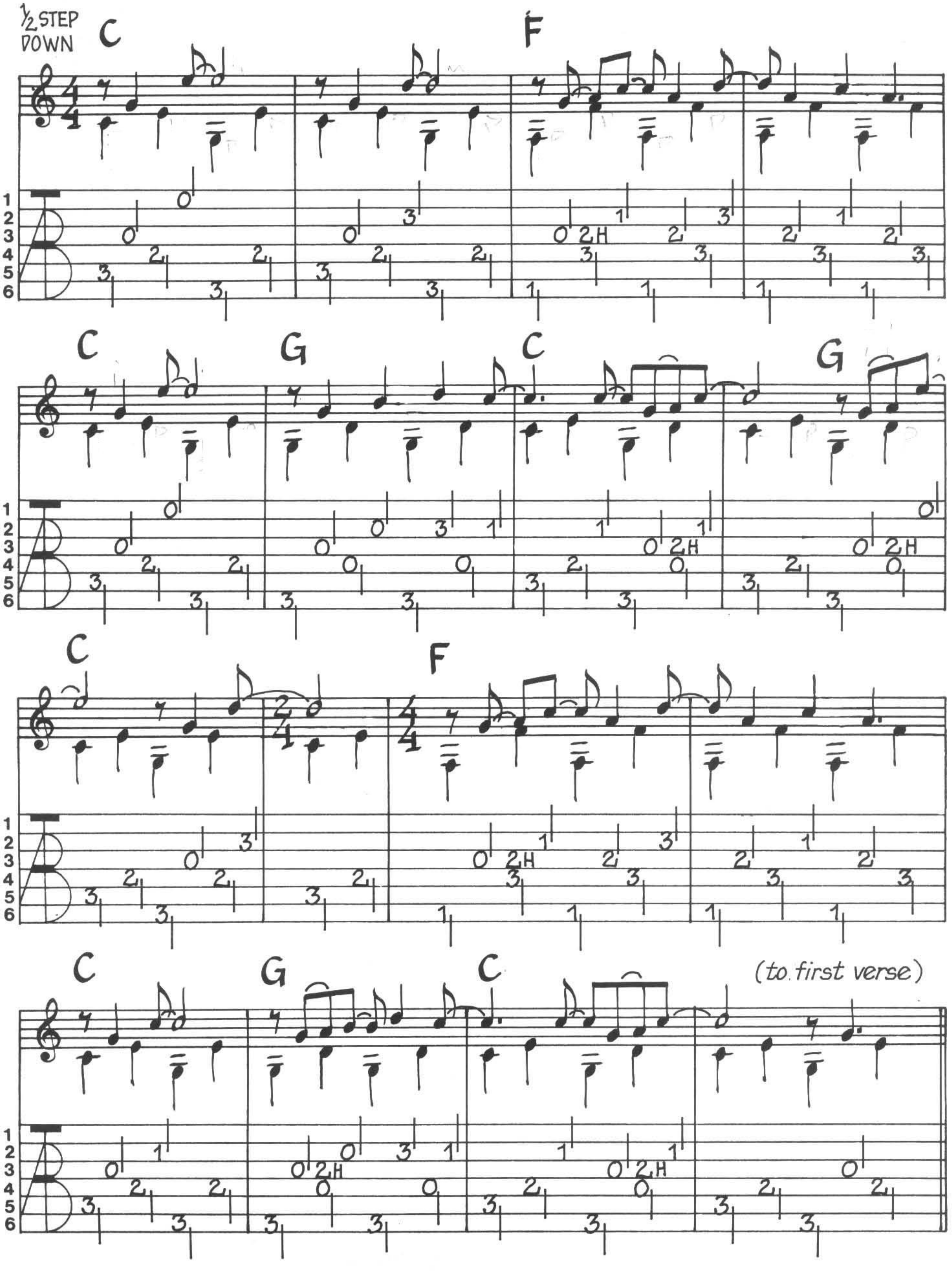
3. I want to go to the courthouse,
   Get our license read.
   Hey, baby, right away.
   Right away, baby right away,
   Hey, honey right away.

4. Hey, hey, honey right away,
   Hey, baby right away

HEY BABY, RIGHT AWAY

INTRO

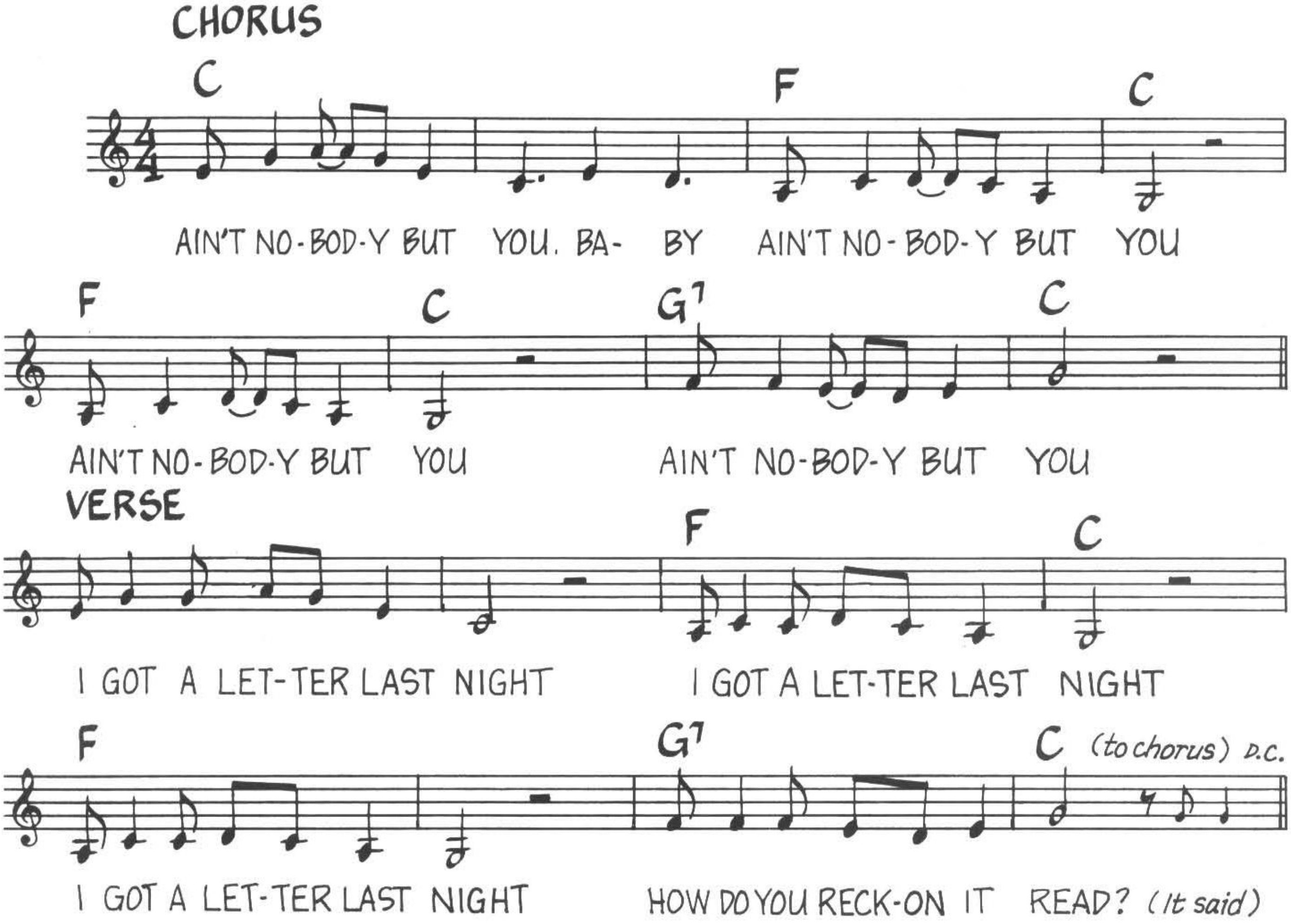
TUNED
½ STEP
DOWN


C
F
C
G
C
G
C
F
C
G
C

(to first verse)

AIN'T NOBODY BUT YOU BABE

by John Hurt


CHORUS
C F C
AIN'T NO-BOD-Y BUT YOU. BA- BY AIN'T NO-BOD-Y BUT YOU
F C G7 C
AIN'T NO-BOD-Y BUT YOU AIN'T NO-BOD-Y BUT YOU
VERSE
F C
I GOT A LET-TER LAST NIGHT I GOT A LET-TER LAST NIGHT
F G7 C (to chorus) D.C.
I GOT A LET-TER LAST NIGHT HOW DO YOU RECK-ON IT READ? (It said)

Chorus:
Ain't nobody but you baby,
Ain't nobody but you,.
Ain't nobody but you,
Ain't nobody but you.

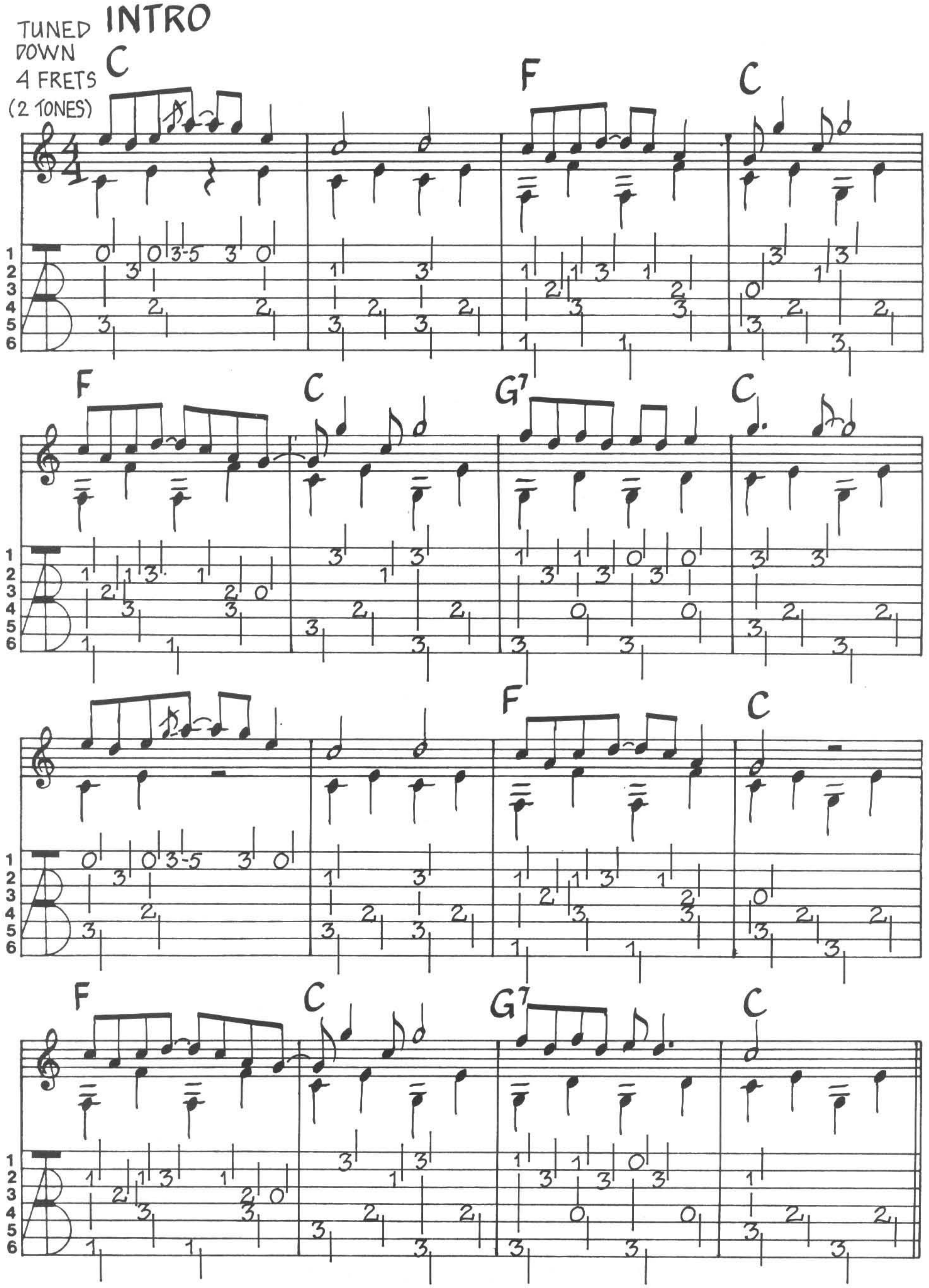
1. I got a letter last night,
I got a letter last night,
I got a letter last night,
How do you reckon it read?

chorus

2. I went down to the ball,
Went down to the ball last night.

chorus

AIN'T NOBODY BUT YOU BABE


TUNED DOWN 4 FRETS (2 TONES)
INTRO
C
F
C
F
C
G7
C
F
C
F
C
G7
C

MAKE ME A PALLET ON YOUR FLOOR

by John Hurt

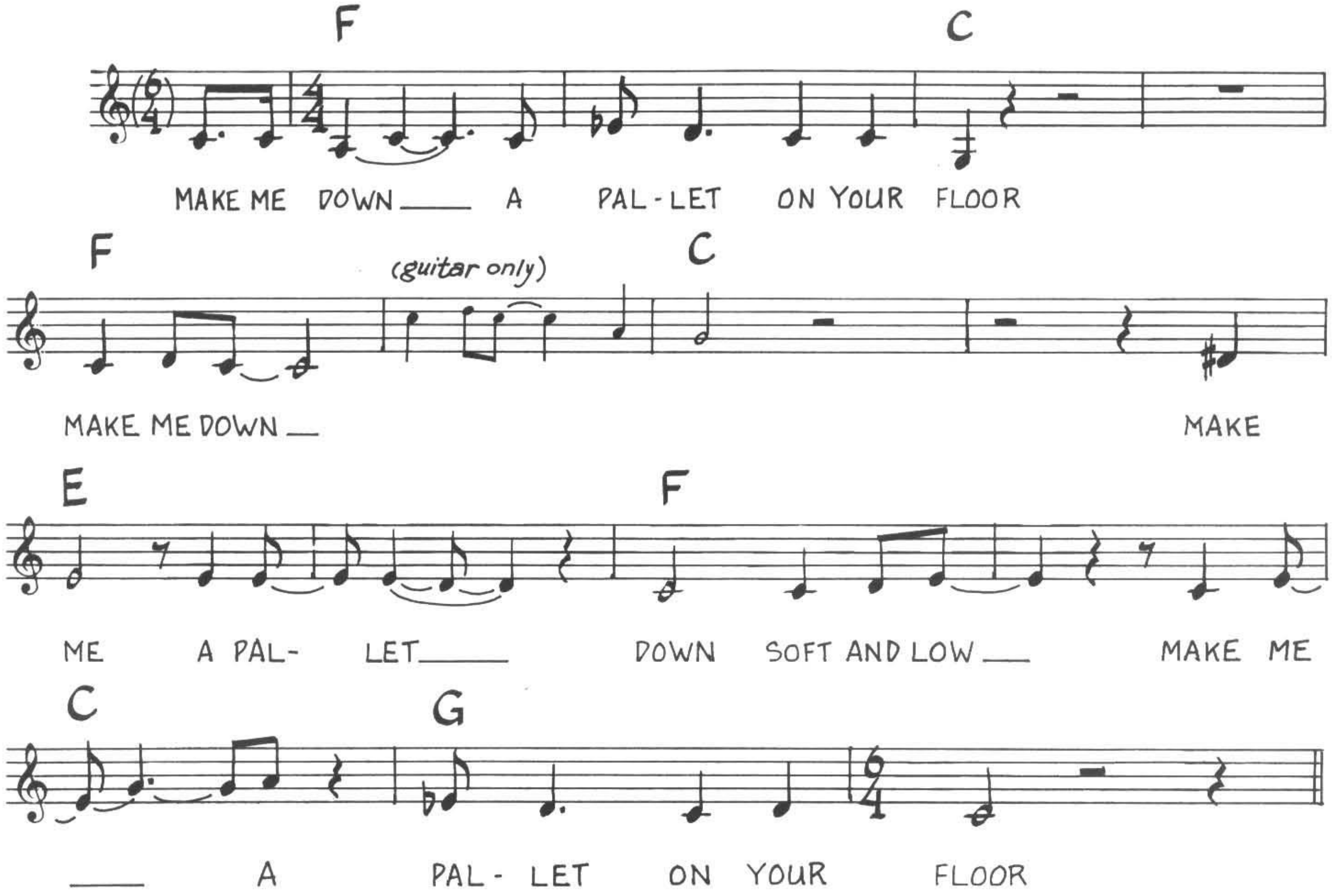

F
C
MAKE ME DOWN ___ A PAL - LET ON YOUR FLOOR
F
(guitar only)
C
MAKE ME DOWN ___
MAKE
E
F
ME A PAL- LET ___ DOWN SOFT AND LOW ___ MAKE ME
C
G
___ A PAL - LET ON YOUR FLOOR

Photo by Tom Hoskins

MAKE ME A PALLET ON YOUR FLOOR

Make me down a pallet on your floor.
Make me down...
Make me down a pallet down, soft and low
Make me a pallet on your floor.

Up the country, 20 miles or more.
I'm going up the country where the cold, sleet and snow.
I'm going up the country, where the cold, sleet and snow.
No tellin' how much further I may go.

Just make me down ...
Make me down...
Make me a pallet, down, soft and low.
Make me a pallet on your floor.

Way I'm sleeping, my back and shoulders tired.
Way I'm sleeping, my back and shoulders tired.
The way I'm sleeping, my back and shoulders tired.
Goin' to turn over and try it on the side.

Repeat first verse.

Don't you let my good girl catch you here.
Don't let my good girl catch you here.
Oh she, might shoot you, liable to cut and starve you too.
No tellin' what she might do.

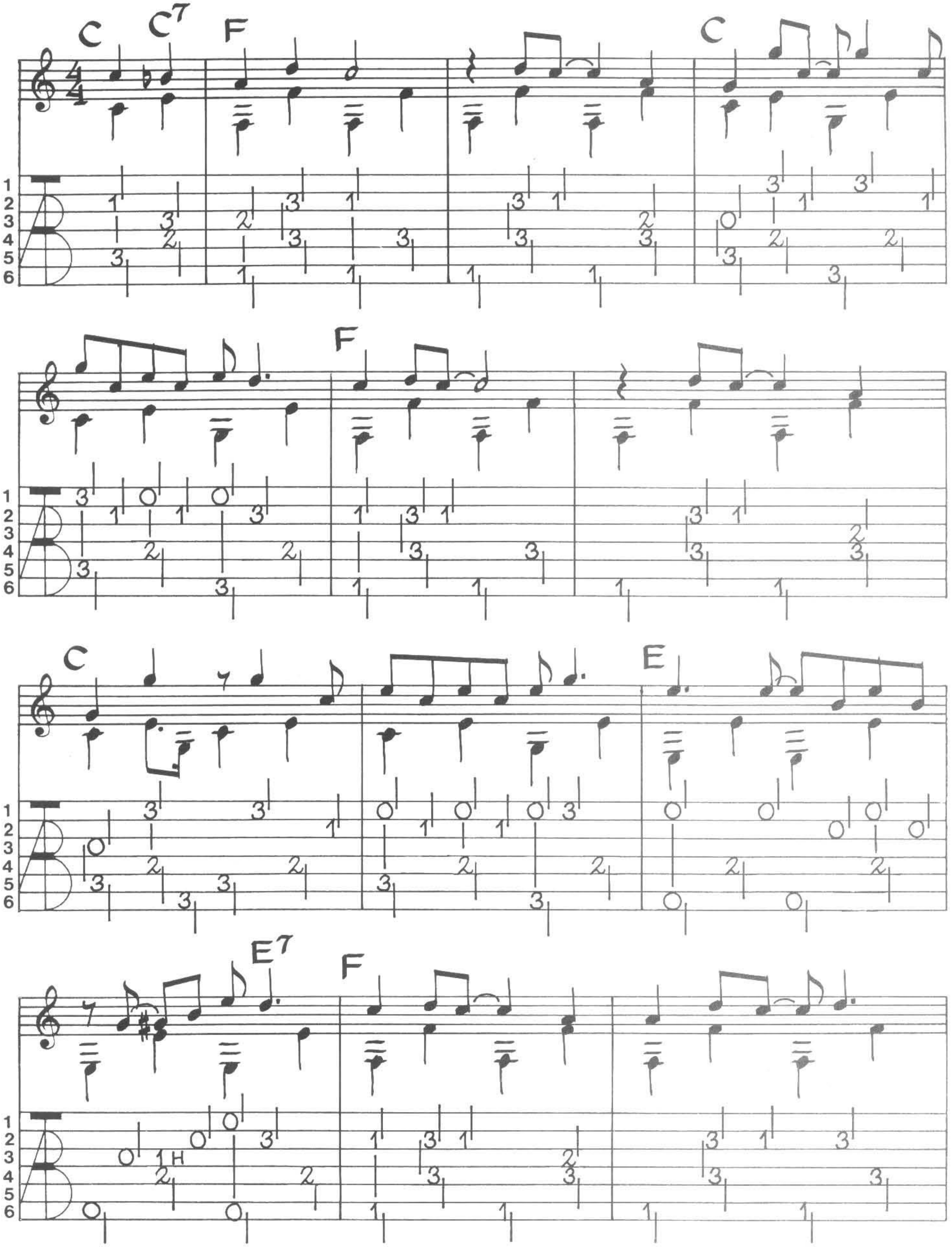
Repeat first verse.

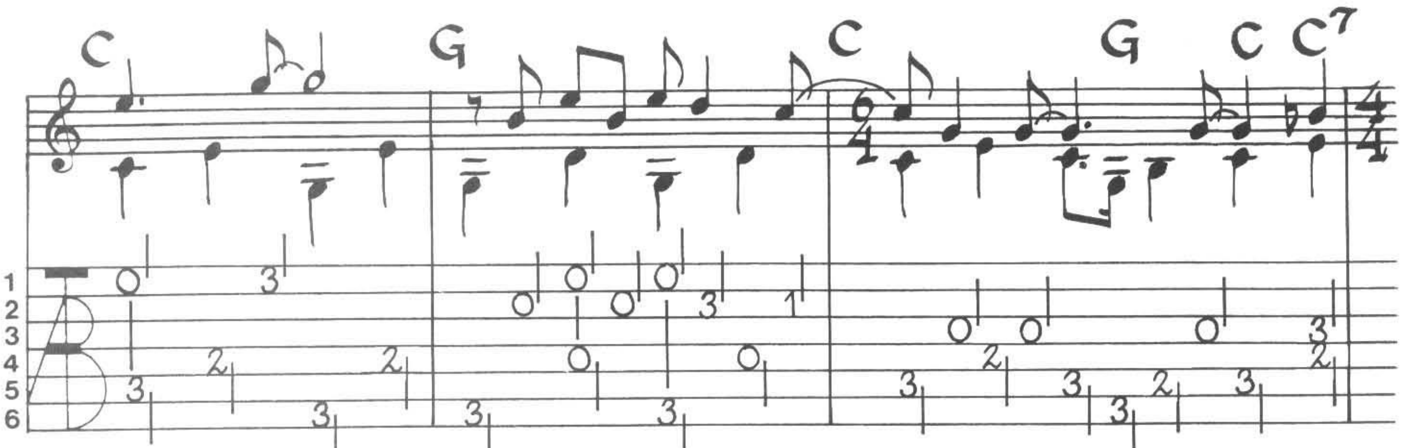
Make it baby, close behind your door.
Make it baby, close behind the door.
Make me a pallet, close behind the door.
Make it where your good man will never go.

Repeat first verse.

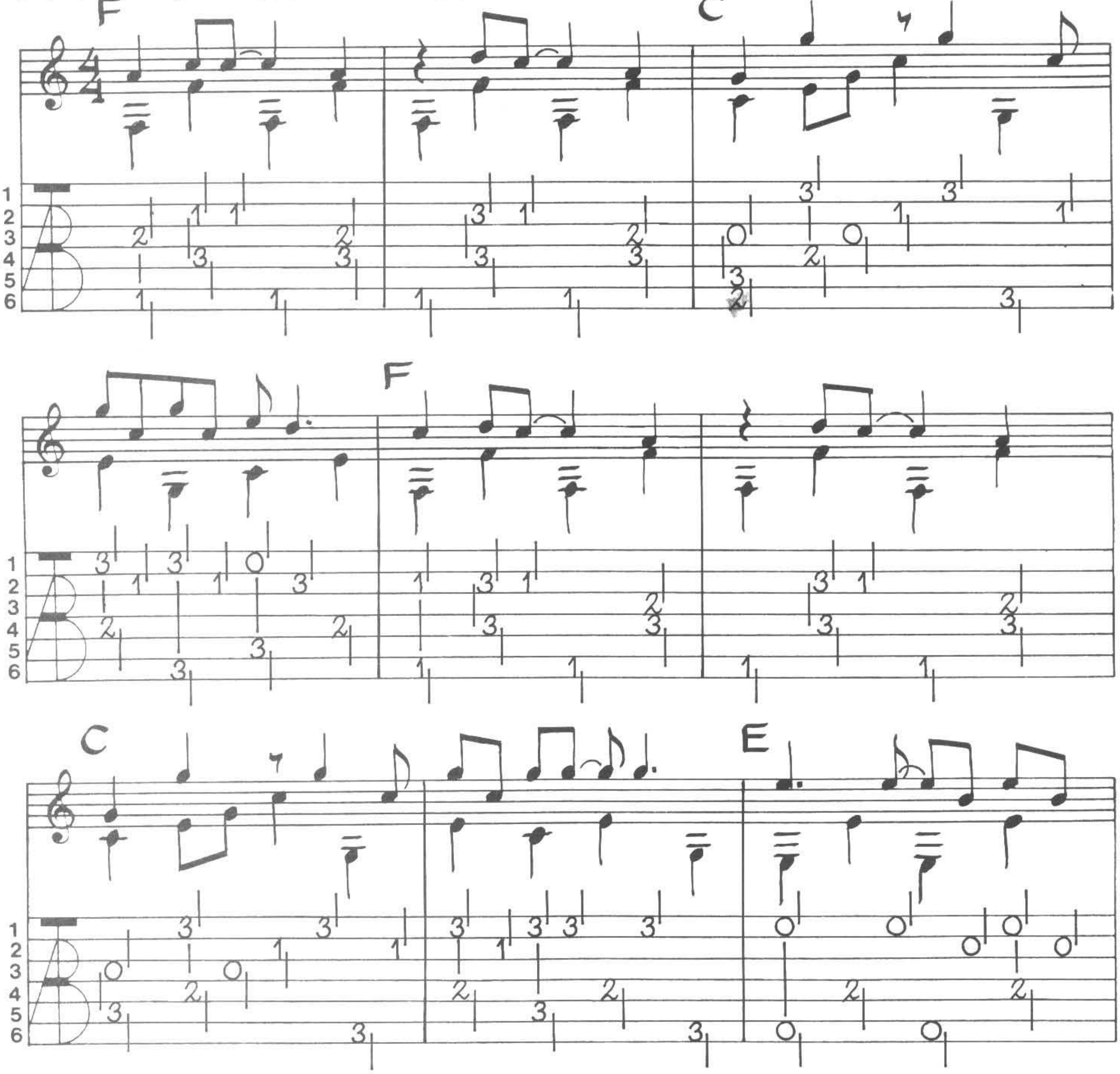
MAKE ME A PALLET ON YOUR FLOOR

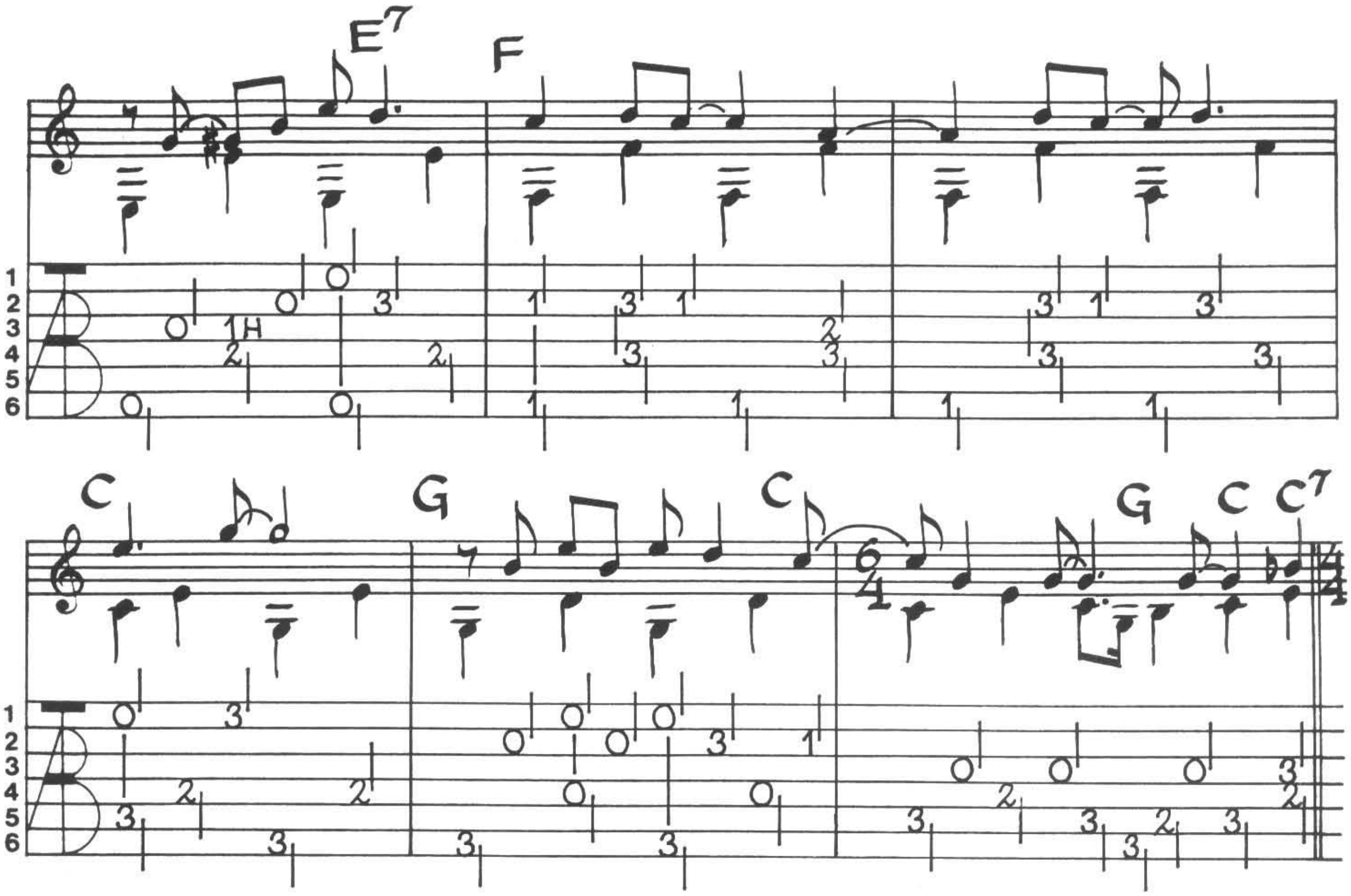
GUITAR INTRO

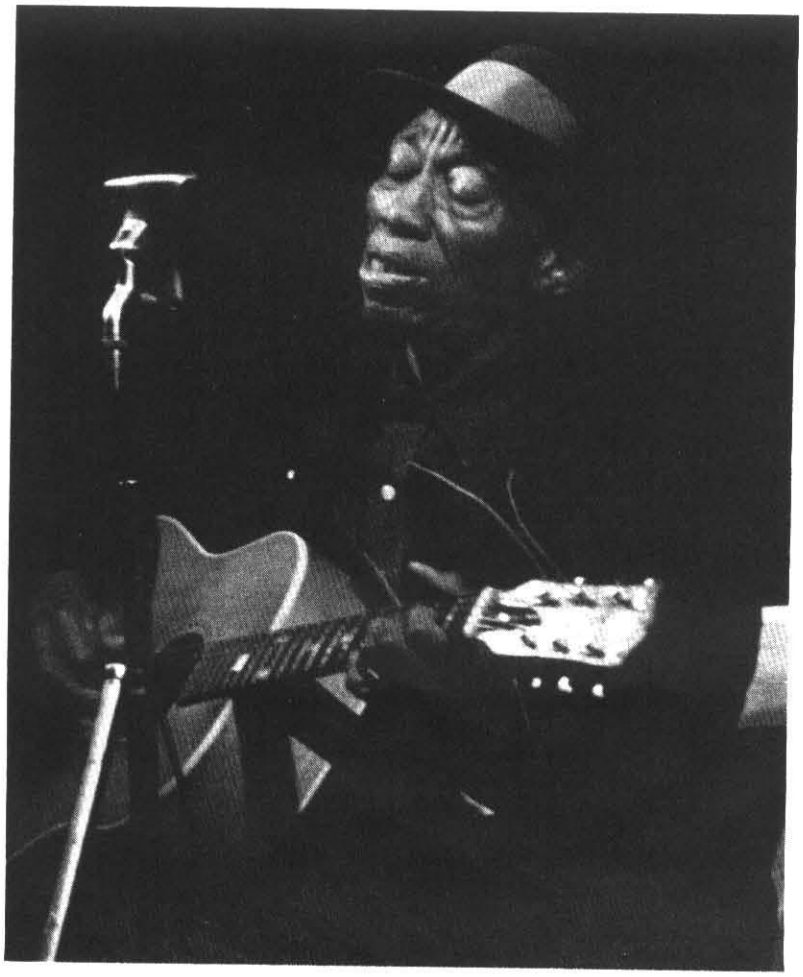

C
C7
F
C
F
C
E
E7
F
1H


C
G
C
G
C
C7
1
2
3
4
5
6

FIRST GUITAR BREAK

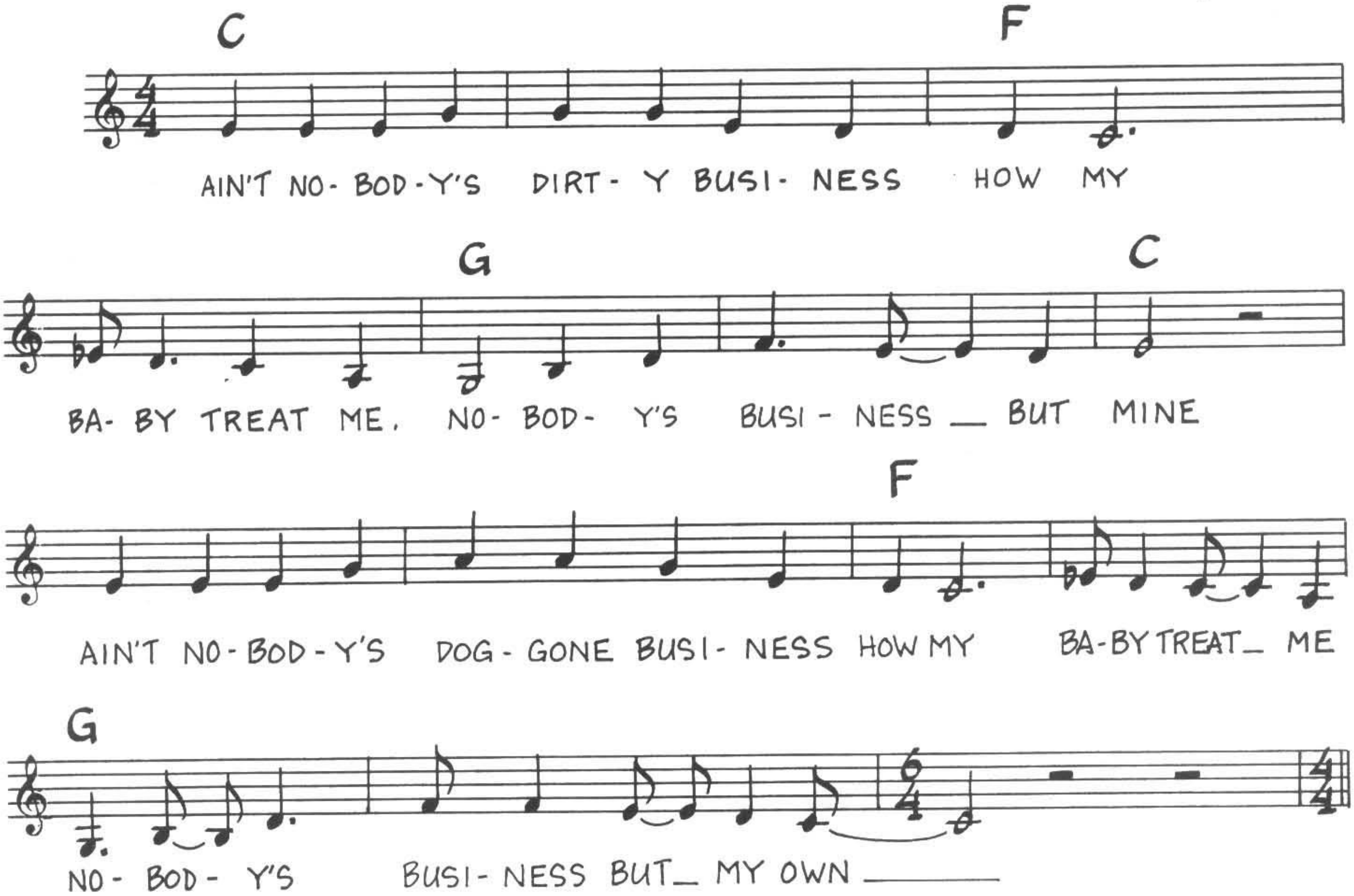

F
C
F
C
E
1
2
3
4
5
6


E7
F
C
G
C
G
C
C7
1H
1
2
3
4
5
6



NOBODY'S DIRTY BUSINESS

by John Hurt


C
F
AIN'T NO-BOD-Y'S DIRT-Y BUSI-NESS HOW MY
G
C
BA-BY TREAT ME, NO-BOD-Y'S BUSI-NESS _ BUT MINE
F
AIN'T NO-BOD-Y'S DOG-GONE BUSI-NESS HOW MY BA-BY TREAT_ ME
G
NO-BOD-Y'S BUSI-NESS BUT_ MY OWN

Nobody's dirty business how my baby treat me,
Nobody's business but mine.
Nobody's dirty business how my baby treat me,
Nobody's business but my own.

Sometimes my baby gets boozy, then again she tries to rule me,
Nobody's business but mine.
Nobody's dirty business how my baby treat me,
Nobody's business but my own.
(Spoken: That's all right, just let her rule me.)

Say, baby, did you get that letter? "If you take me back I'll treat you better."
Nobody's business mine.
Nobody's dirty business how my baby treat me,
Nobody's business but my own.

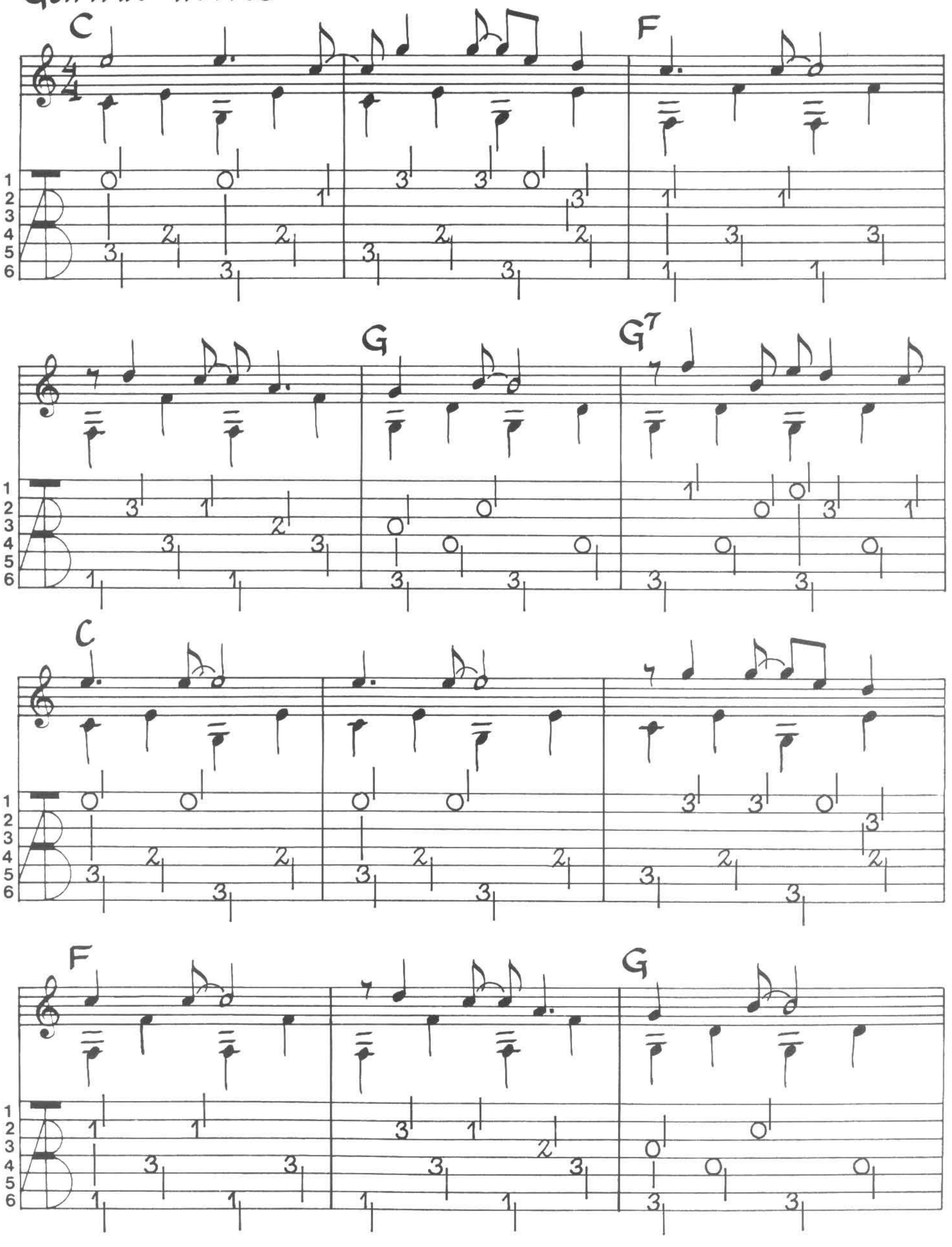
I'm goin' back to Pensacola, gonna buy my baby a money (muller?)*
Nobody's business but mine.
Nobody's dirty business how my baby treat me,
Nobody's business but my own.

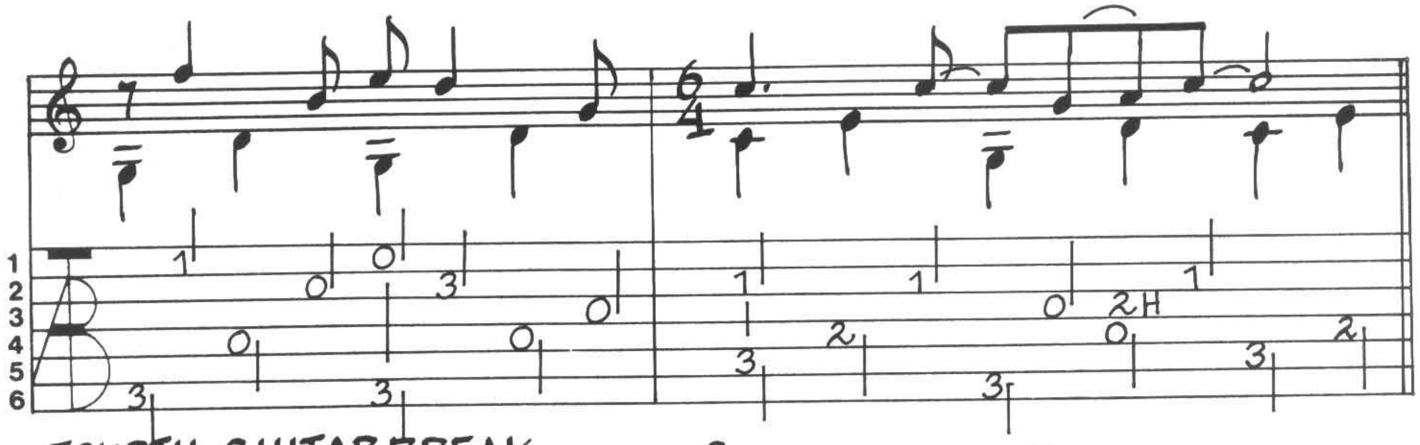
Nobody's . . .
Nobody's business but mine.
Nobody's dirty business how my baby treat me,
Nobody's business but my won.

**muller: a grinding tool*

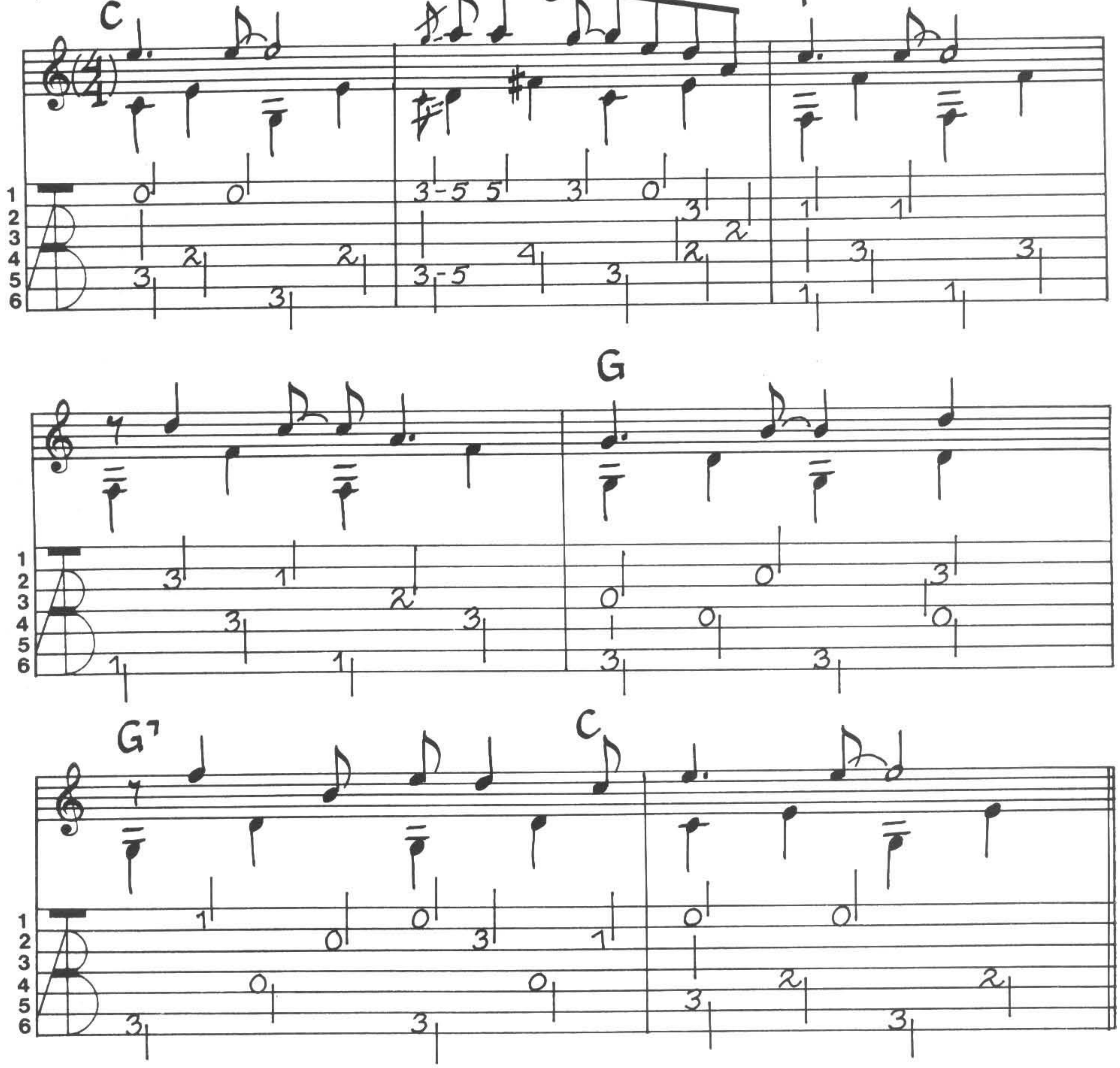
NOBODY'S DIRTY BUSINESS

GUITAR INTRO


C
F
G
G7
C
F
G
1
2
3
4
5
6

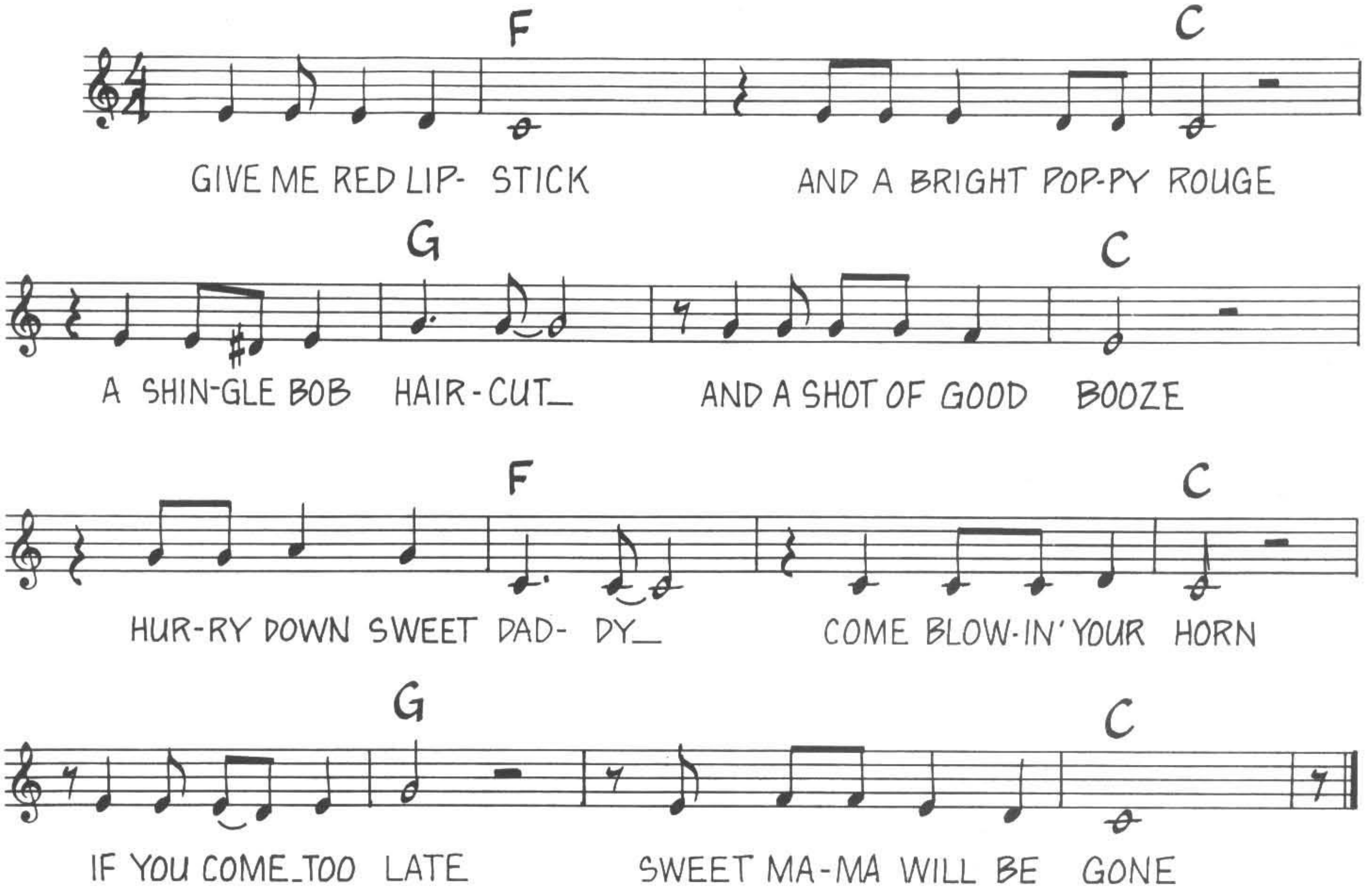


FOURTH GUITAR BREAK



RICHLAND WOMEN BLUES

by John Hurt


F
C
GIVE ME RED LIP- STICK AND A BRIGHT POP-PY ROUGE
G
C
A SHIN-GLE BOB HAIR-CUT_ AND A SHOT OF GOOD BOOZE
F
C
HUR-RY DOWN SWEET DAD- DY_ COME BLOW-IN' YOUR HORN
G
C
IF YOU COME_TOO LATE SWEET MA-MA WILL BE GONE

Gimme red lipstick and a bright purple rouge,
A shingle-bob† haircut and a shot of good boo'. ‡
Hurry down, sweet daddy, come blowin' your horn,
If you come too late, sweet mama will be gone.

Now, I'm rarin' to go, got red shoes on my feet,
My mind is sittin' right for a Tin Lizzie seat.
Hurry down, sweet daddy, come blowin' your horn,
If you come too late, sweet mama will be gone.

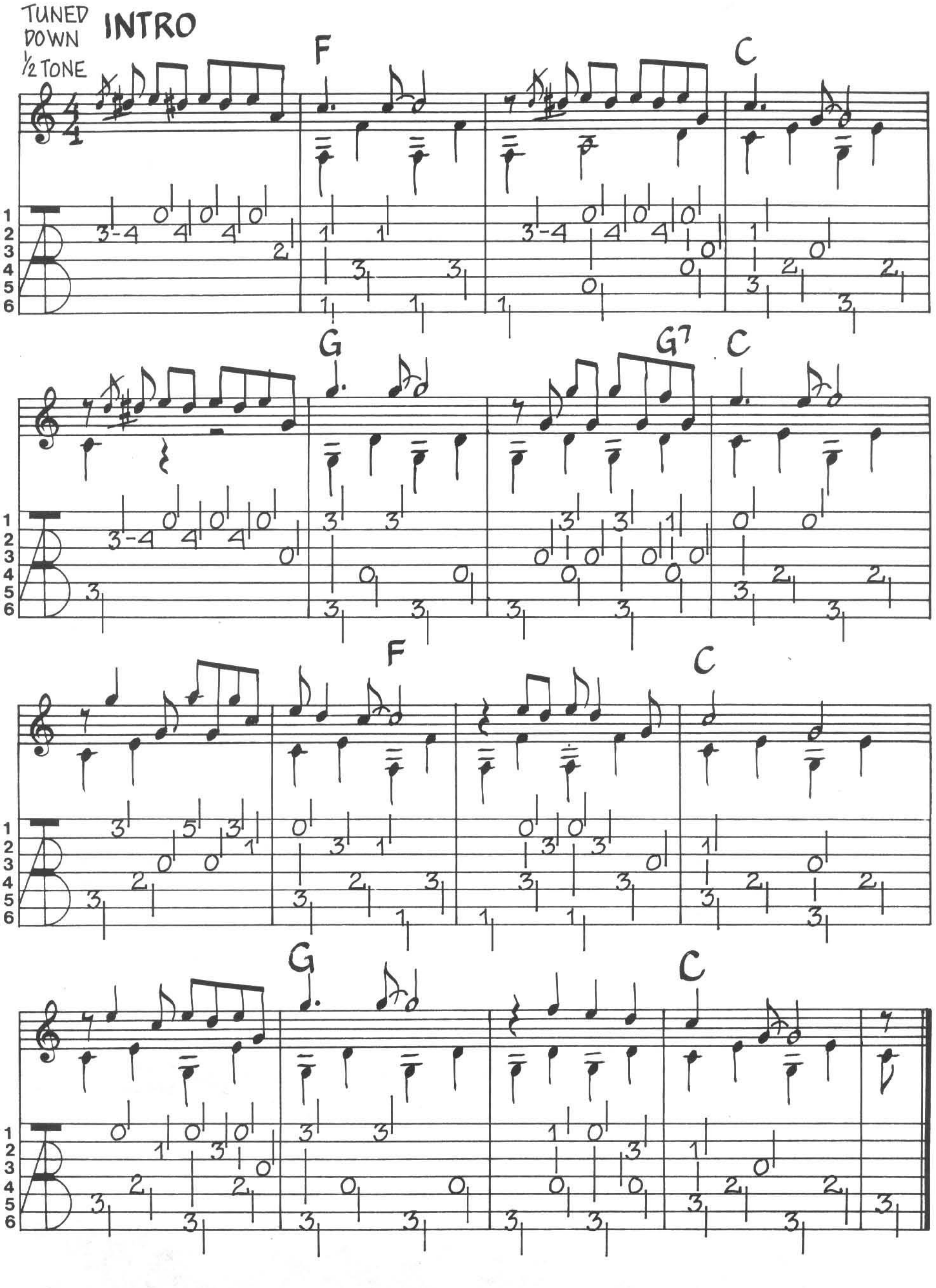
I'd like to fashion shop, and get the one looks best.
Your own sweet mama wants a brand new dress.
Hurry down, sweet daddy, come blowin" your horn,
If you come too late, sweet mama will be gone.

Dress skirt cut high, then they cut low,
Don't think I'm a sport, ** keep on watchin' me go.
Hurry down, sweet daddy, come blowin' your horn,
If you come too late, sweet mama will be gone.

The red rooster said, "Cockle-doodle-do-do,"
The Richlands woman said, "Any dude will do."
Hurry down, sweet daddy, come blowin' your horn,
If you come too late, sweet mama will be gone.
Every Sunday mornin', church (people?) watch me go,
My wings (are?) sprouted out, the preacher told me so.
Hurry down, sweet daddy, come blowin' your horn,
If you come too late, sweet mama will be gone.

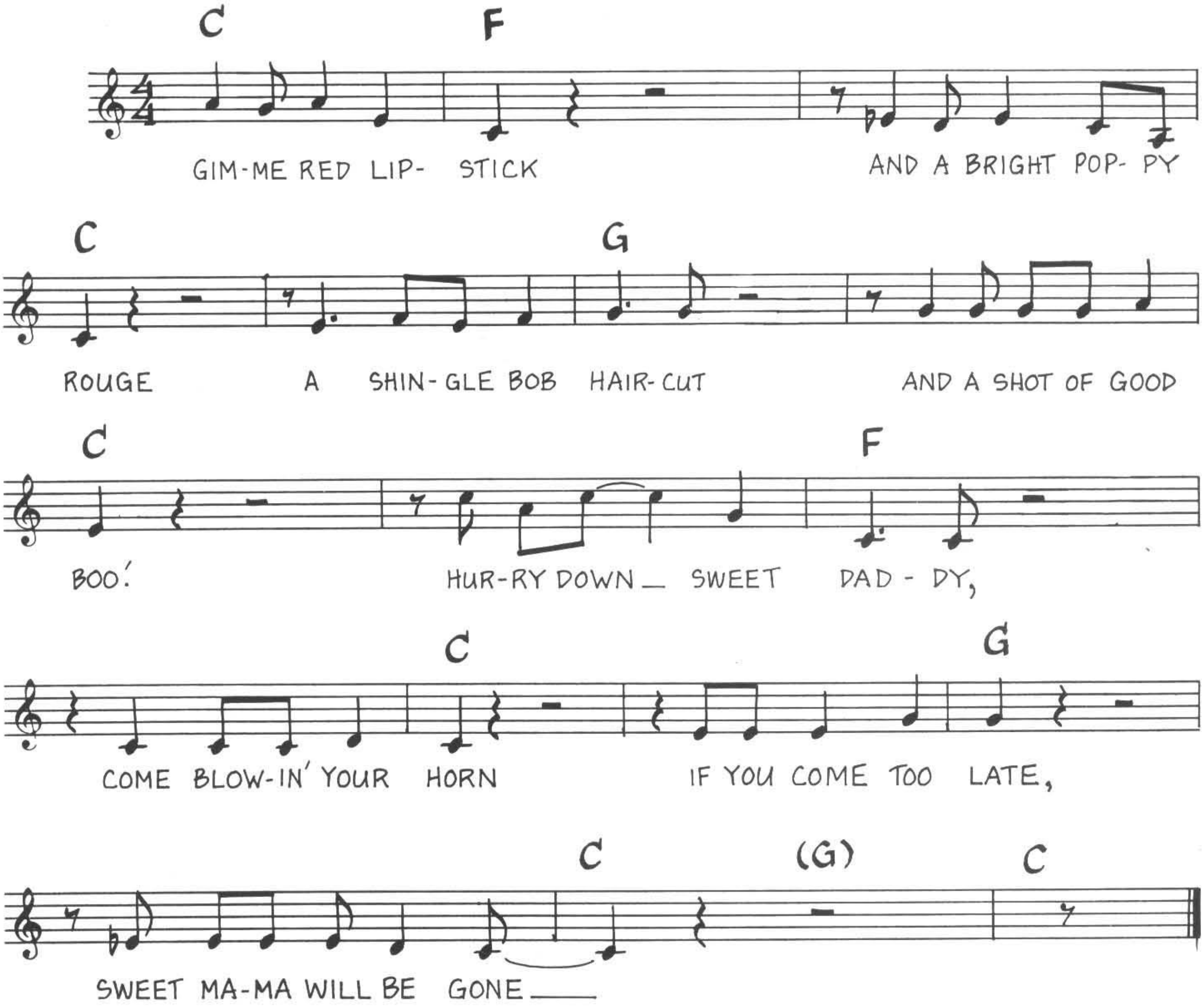
With rosy red garters, pink hose on my feet,
Turkey red bloomer, with a rumble seat.
Hurry down, sweet daddy, come blowin' your horn,
If you come too late, sweet mama will be gone.

RICHLAND WOMEN BLUES


TUNED DOWN ½ TONE
INTRO
F
C
G
G7
C
F
C
G
C

RICHLAND WOMEN BLUES

(Alternate version from The Immortal Mississippi John Hurt /Vanguard 79248)


C
F
GIM-ME RED LIP- STICK
AND A BRIGHT POP- PY
C
G
ROUGE
A SHIN-GLE BOB HAIR-CUT
AND A SHOT OF GOOD
C
F
BOO!
HUR-RY DOWN — SWEET DAD - DY,
C
G
COME BLOW-IN' YOUR HORN
IF YOU COME TOO LATE,
C
(G)
C
SWEET MA-MA WILL BE GONE ——

RICHLAND WOMEN BLUES

Gimme red lipstick and a bright purple rouge,
A shingle-bob† haircut and a shot of good boo'. ‡
Hurry down, sweet daddy, come blowin' your horn,
If you come too late, sweet mama will be gone.

Come along, young man, everythin's settin' right,
My husband's goin' away till next Saturday night.
Hurry down, sweet daddy, come blowin' your horn,
If you come too late, sweet mama will be gone.

Now, I'm rarin' to go, got red shoes on my feet,
My mind is sittin' right for a Tin Lizzie seat.
Hurry down, sweet daddy, come blowin' your horn,
If you come too late, sweet mama will be gone.

The red rooster said, "Cockle-doodle-do-do,"
The Richlands woman said, "Any dude will do."
Hurry down, sweet daddy, come blowin' your horn,
If you come too late, sweet mama will be gone.

With rosy red garters, pink hose on my feet,
Turkey red bloomer, with a rumble seat.
Hurry down, sweet daddy, come blowin' your horn,
If you come too late, sweet mama will be gone.

Every Sunday mornin', church (people?) watch me go,
My wings (are?) sprouted out, the preacher told me so.
Hurry down, sweet daddy, come blowin' your horn,
If you come too late, sweet mama will be gone.

Dress skirt cut high, then they cut low,
Don't think I'm a sport, ** keep on watchin' me go.
Hurry down, sweet daddy, come blowin' your horn,
If you come too late, sweet mama will be gone.

Gimme red lipstick and a bright purple rouge,
A shingle-bob haircut and a shot of good boo'
Hurry down, sweet daddy, come blowin' your horn,
If you come too late, sweet mama will be gone.

*Blues collector Dick Spottswood informs us that Hurt originally performed this song at the request of William Meyers, a West Virginian who planned to record it on his own privately produced label around 1929. Since Meyers was a songwriter and the work was a far cry from blues, it may have been Meyers' composition.

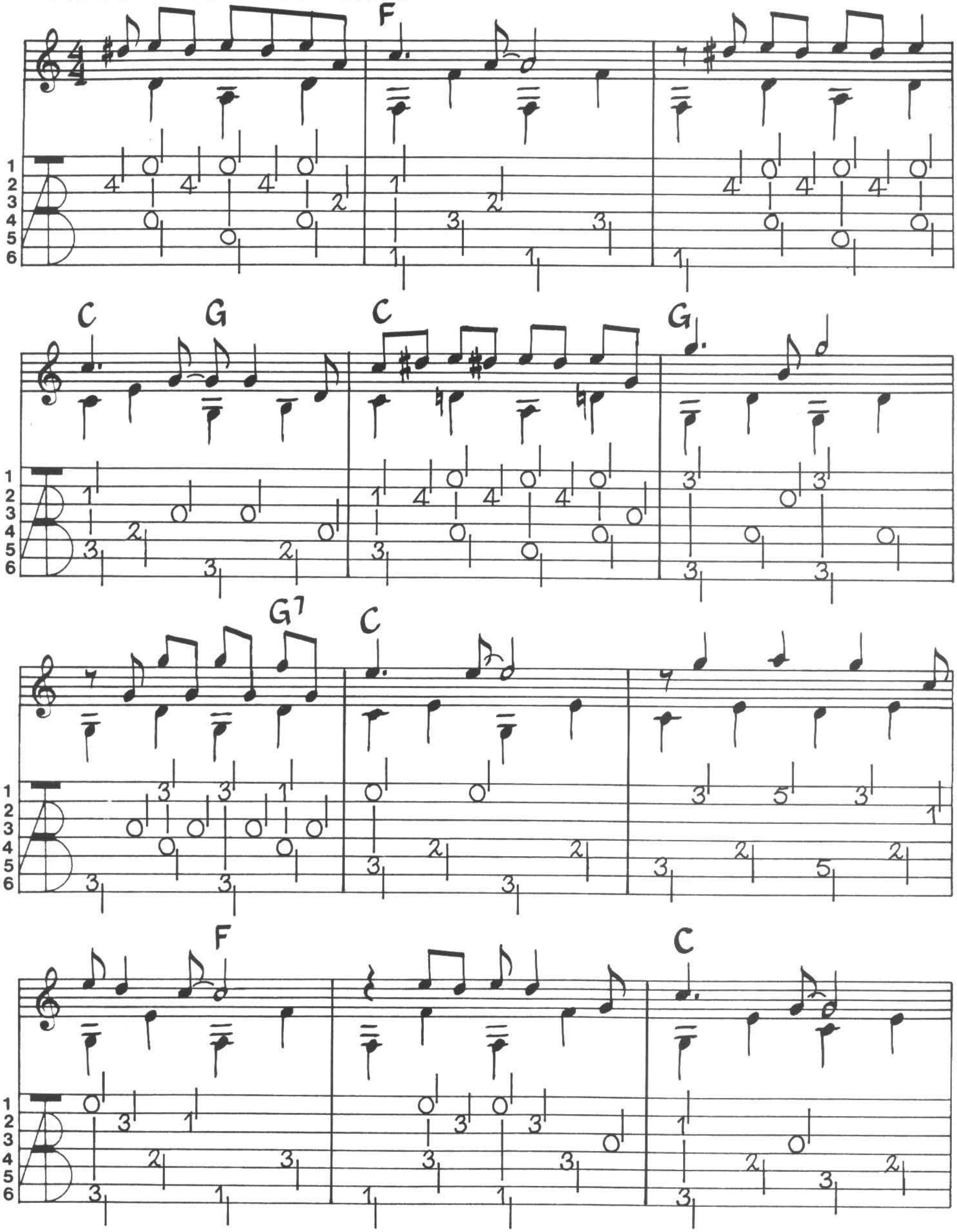
The Richlands in question is probably a small town (population 1300 to 1930) of the same name in southeastern Virginia.

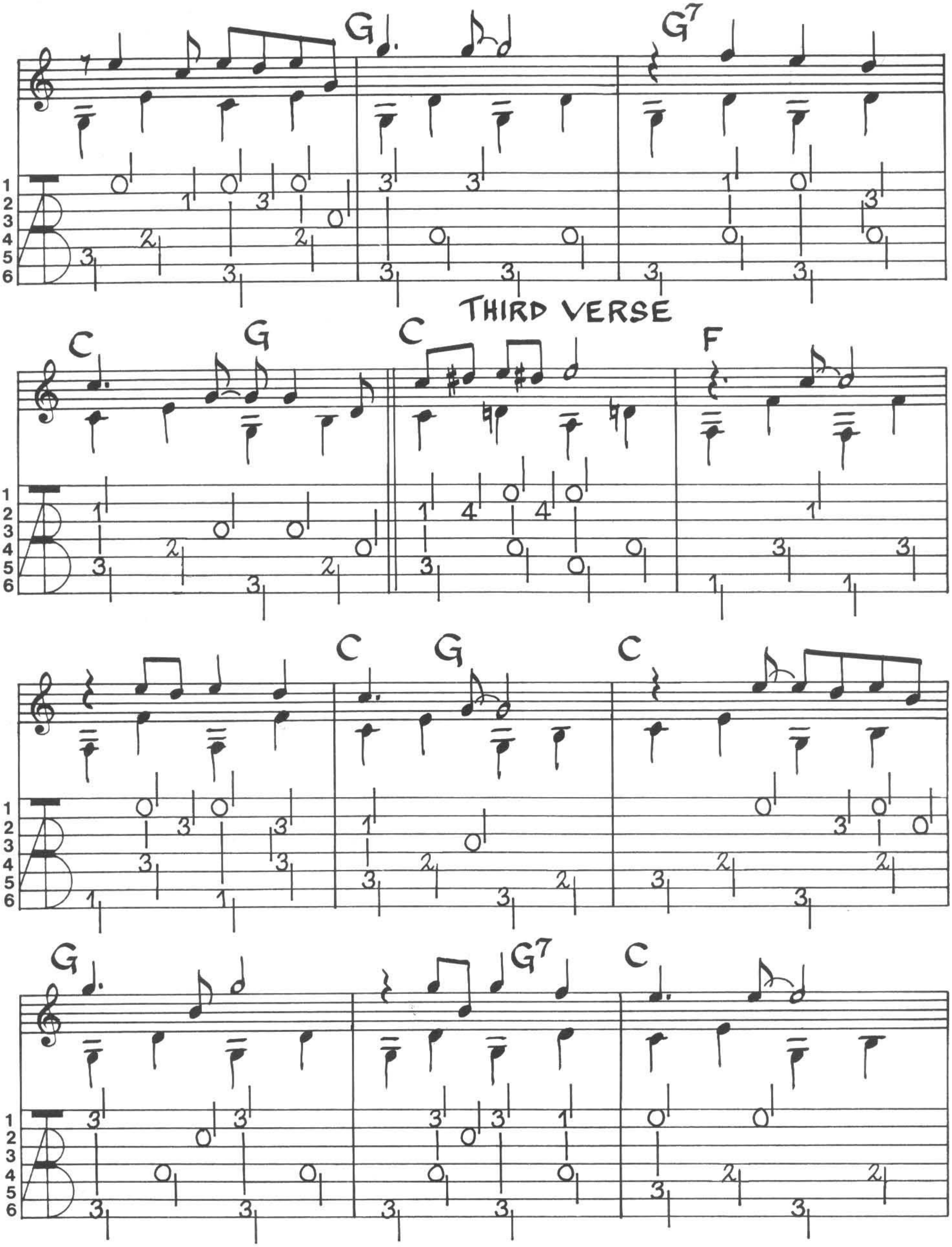
† *shingle-bob:* a fashionable flapper's hair style of the twenties, better known as "the shingle," and so named because the back was clipped in layers.

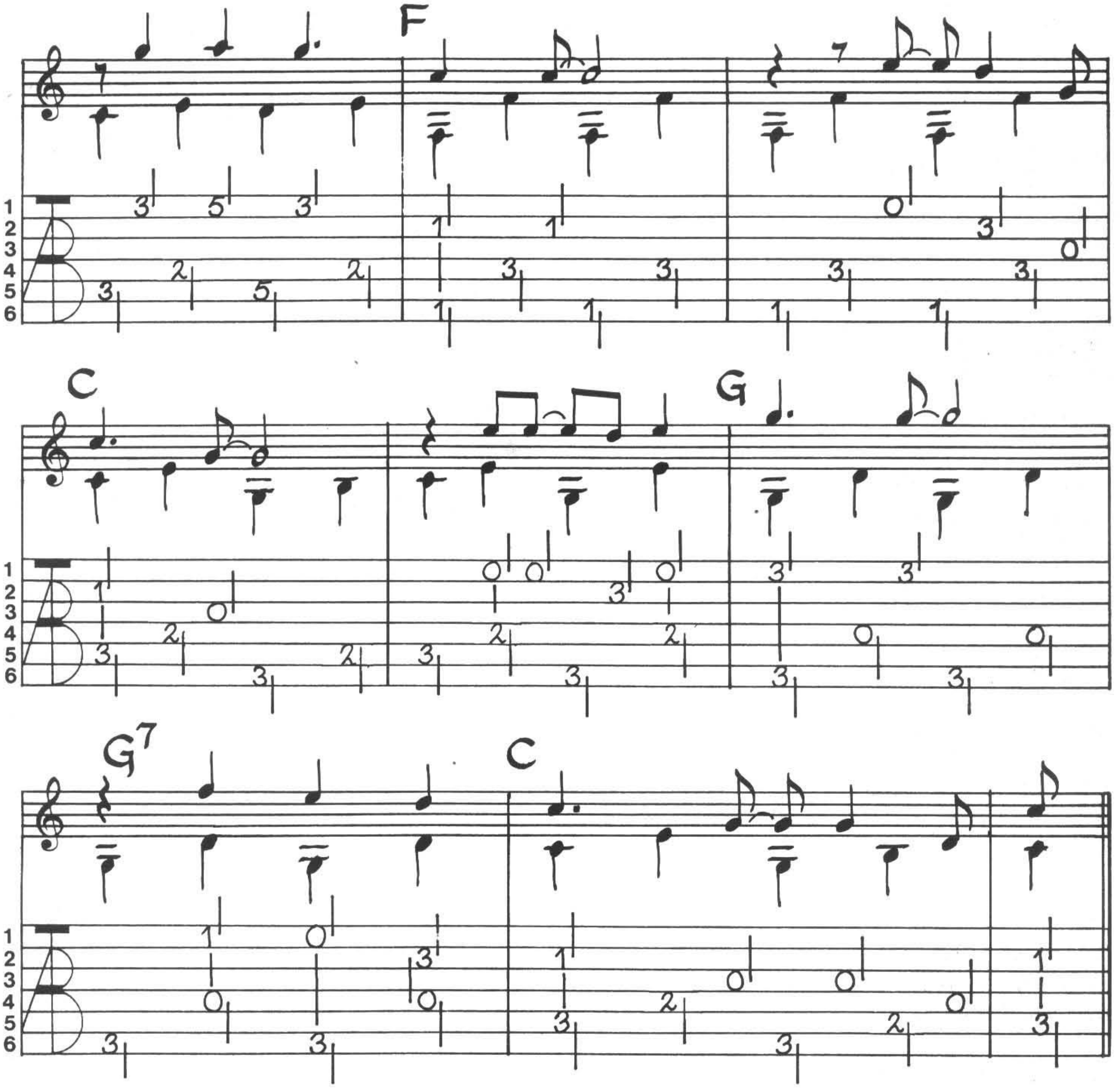
‡ *boo':* booze

** *sport:* a passé term for a playboy or a party girl.

FIRST GUITAR BREAK

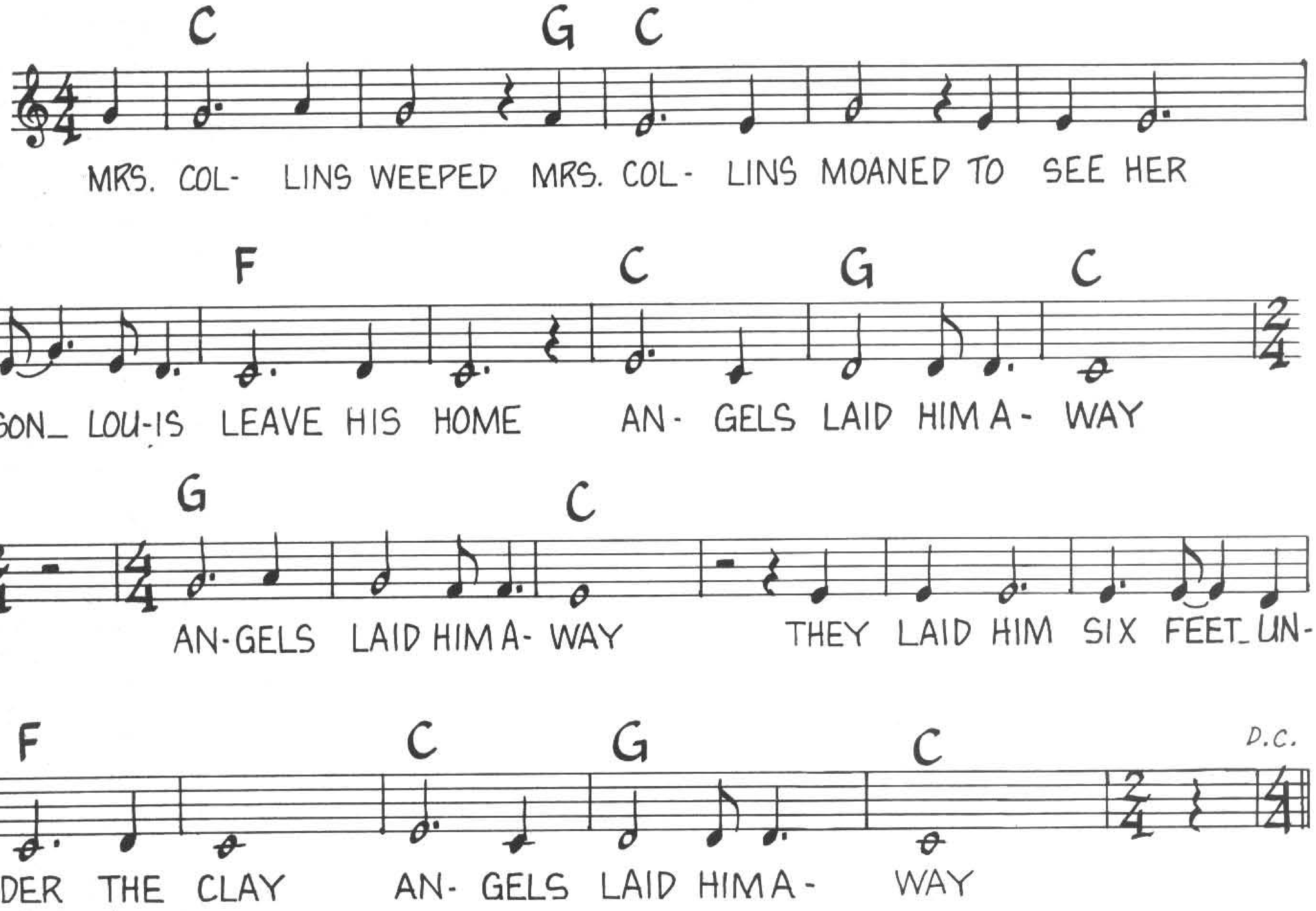

F
C
G
C
G
G7
C
F
C
1
2
3
4
5
6


G
G7
THIRD VERSE
C
G
C
F
C
G
C
G
G7
C


F
C
G
G7
C
1
2
3
4
5
6

LOUIS COLLINS

by John Hurt


C G C
MRS. COL- LINS WEEPED MRS. COL- LINS MOANED TO SEE HER
F C G C
SON_ LOU-IS LEAVE HIS HOME AN- GELS LAID HIM A- WAY
G C
AN-GELS LAID HIM A- WAY THEY LAID HIM SIX FEET_UN-
F C G C
DER THE CLAY AN- GELS LAID HIM A- WAY
D.C.

Mrs. Collins weeped, Mrs. Collins moaned
To see her son Louis leavin' home.
The angels laid him away.

The angels laid him away,
They laid him six feet under the clay.
The angels laid him away.

Oh, kind friends, oh ain't it hard?
To see poor Louis in a new graveyard.
The angels laid him away.

Oh, Bob shot once and Louis shot, too [two]
Shot poor Collins, shot him through and through.
The angels laid him away.

The angels laid him away,
They laid him six feet under the clay.
The angels laid him away.

Mrs. Collins weeped, Mrs. Collins moaned
To see her son Louis leavin' home.
The angels laid him away.

The angels laid him away.
They laid him six feet under the clay.
The angels laid him away.

Oh, when they heard that Louis was dead,
All the people, they dressed in red.
The angels laid him away.

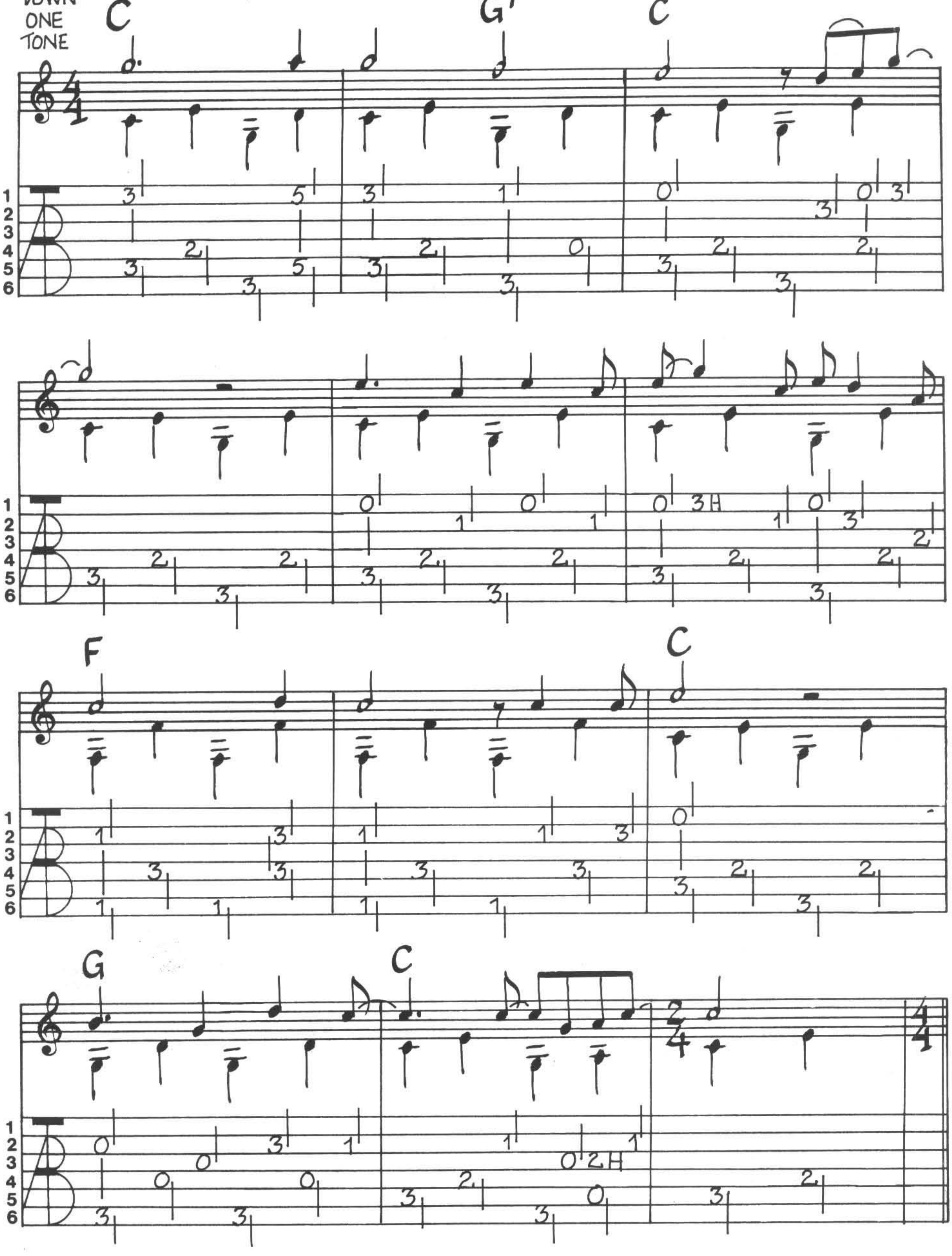
The angels laid him away,
They laid him six feet under the clay.
The angels laid him away.

*According to Hurt, this song (his own composition) was based on a true episode.)

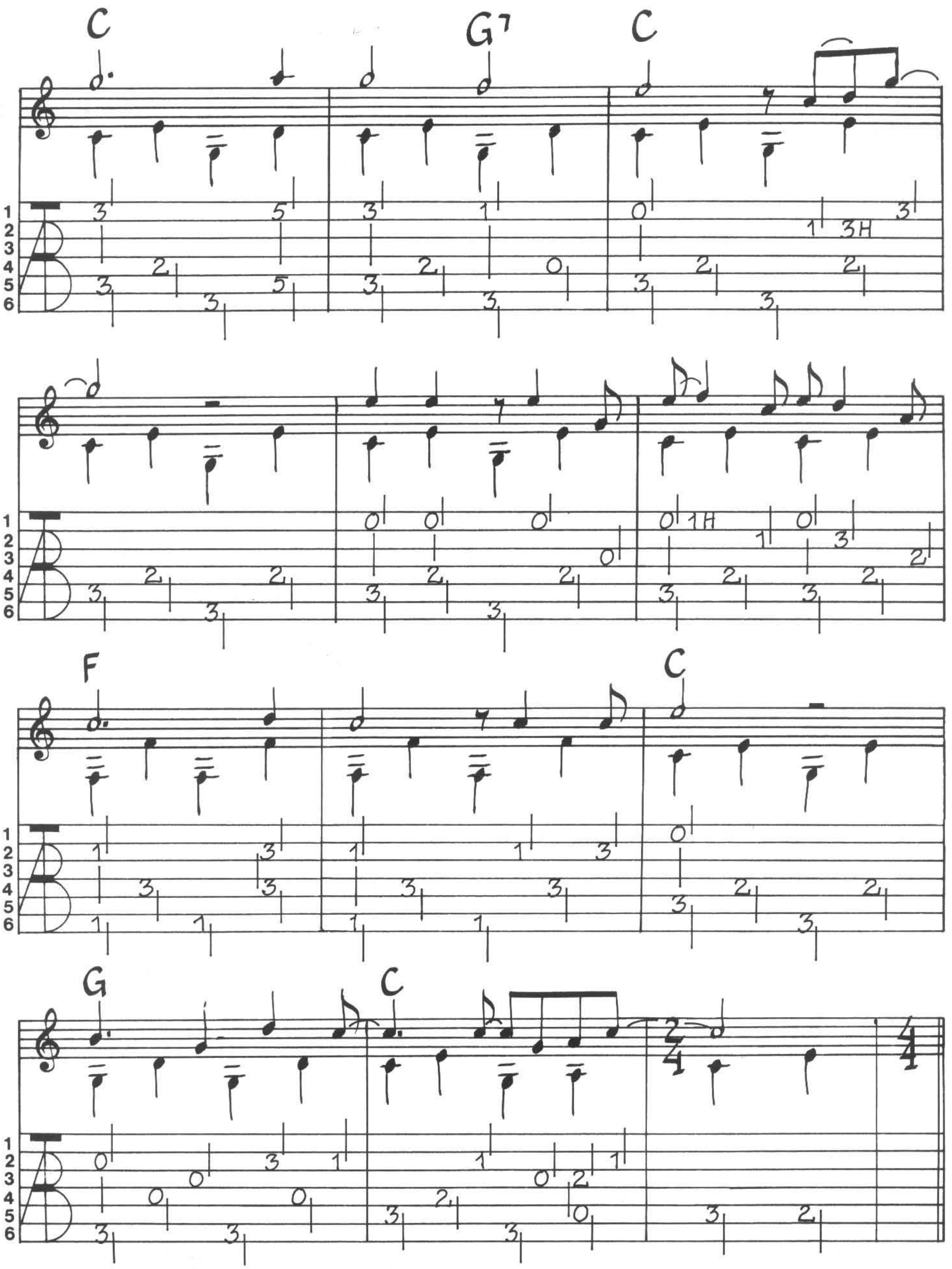
LOUIS COLLINS

TUNED DOWN ONE TONE

FIRST GUITAR BREAK

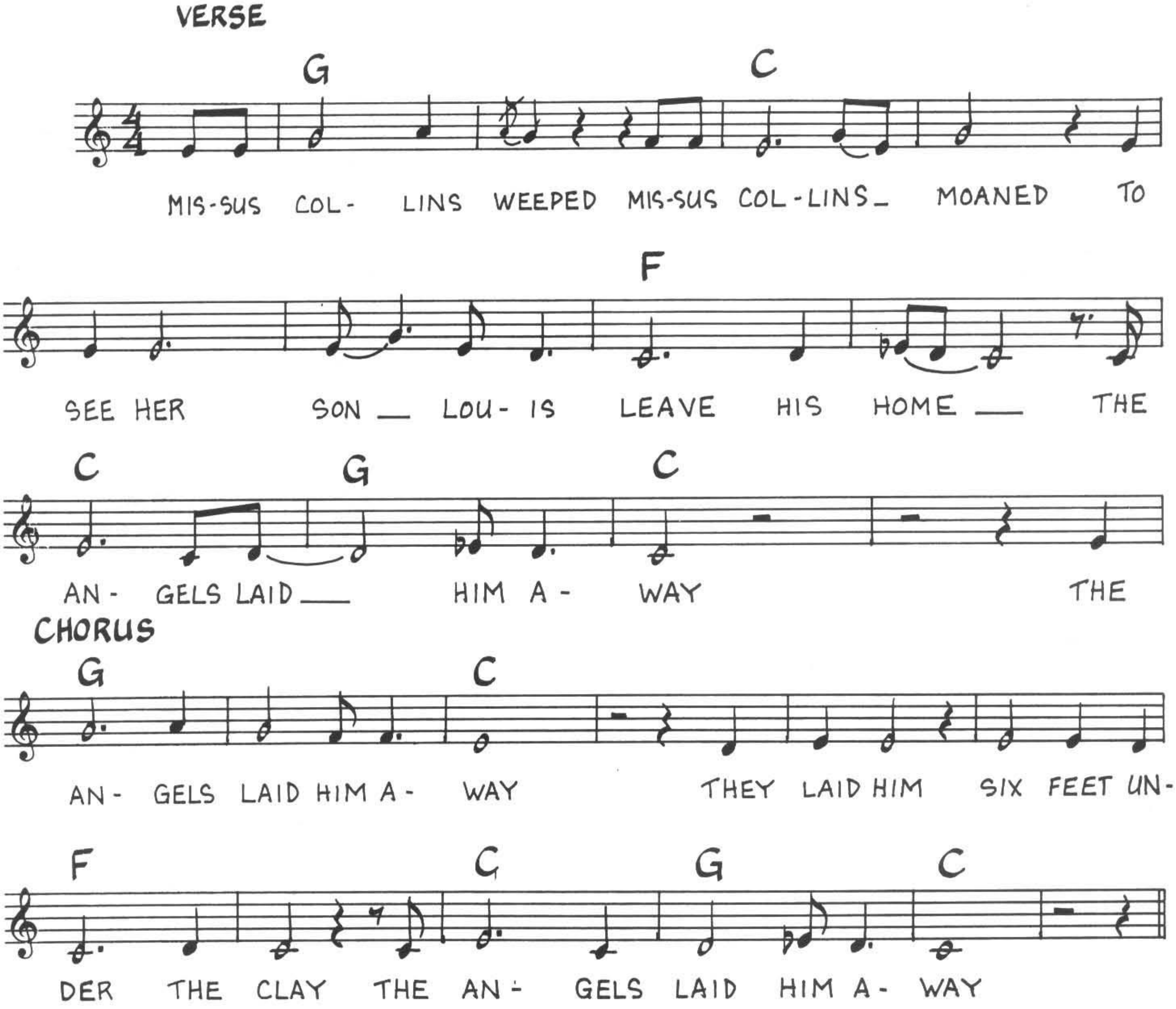

C
G7
C
F
C
G
C
3H
2H
1
2
3
4
5
6

SECOND GUITAR BREAK


C
G7
C
F
C
G
C
3H
1H
1
2
3
4
5
6

LOUIS COLLINS

(Alternate version from Mississippi John Hurt Today /Vanguard 79220)


VERSE
G C
MIS-SUS COL- LINS WEEPED MIS-SUS COL-LINS_ MOANED TO
F
SEE HER SON __ LOU- IS LEAVE HIS HOME __ THE
C G C
AN- GELS LAID __ HIM A- WAY THE
CHORUS
G C
AN- GELS LAID HIM A- WAY THEY LAID HIM SIX FEET UN-
F C G C
DER THE CLAY THE AN- GELS LAID HIM A- WAY

Mrs. Collins weeped, Mrs. Collins moaned
To see her son Louis leavin' home.
The angels laid him away.

The angels laid him away,
They laid him six feet under the clay.
The angels laid him away.

Mrs. Collins weeped, Mrs. Collins moaned
To see her son Louis leavin' home.
The angels laid him away.

Oh, Bob shot once and Louis shot, too [two]
Shot poor Collins, shot him through and through.
The angels laid him away.

Oh, kind friends, oh ain't it hard?
To see poor Louis in a new graveyard.
The angels laid him away.

The angels laid him away,
They laid him six feet under the clay.
The angels laid him away.

Oh, when they heard that Louis was dead,
All the people, they dressed in red.
The angels laid him away.

The angels laid him away.
They laid him six feet under the clay.
The angels laid him away.

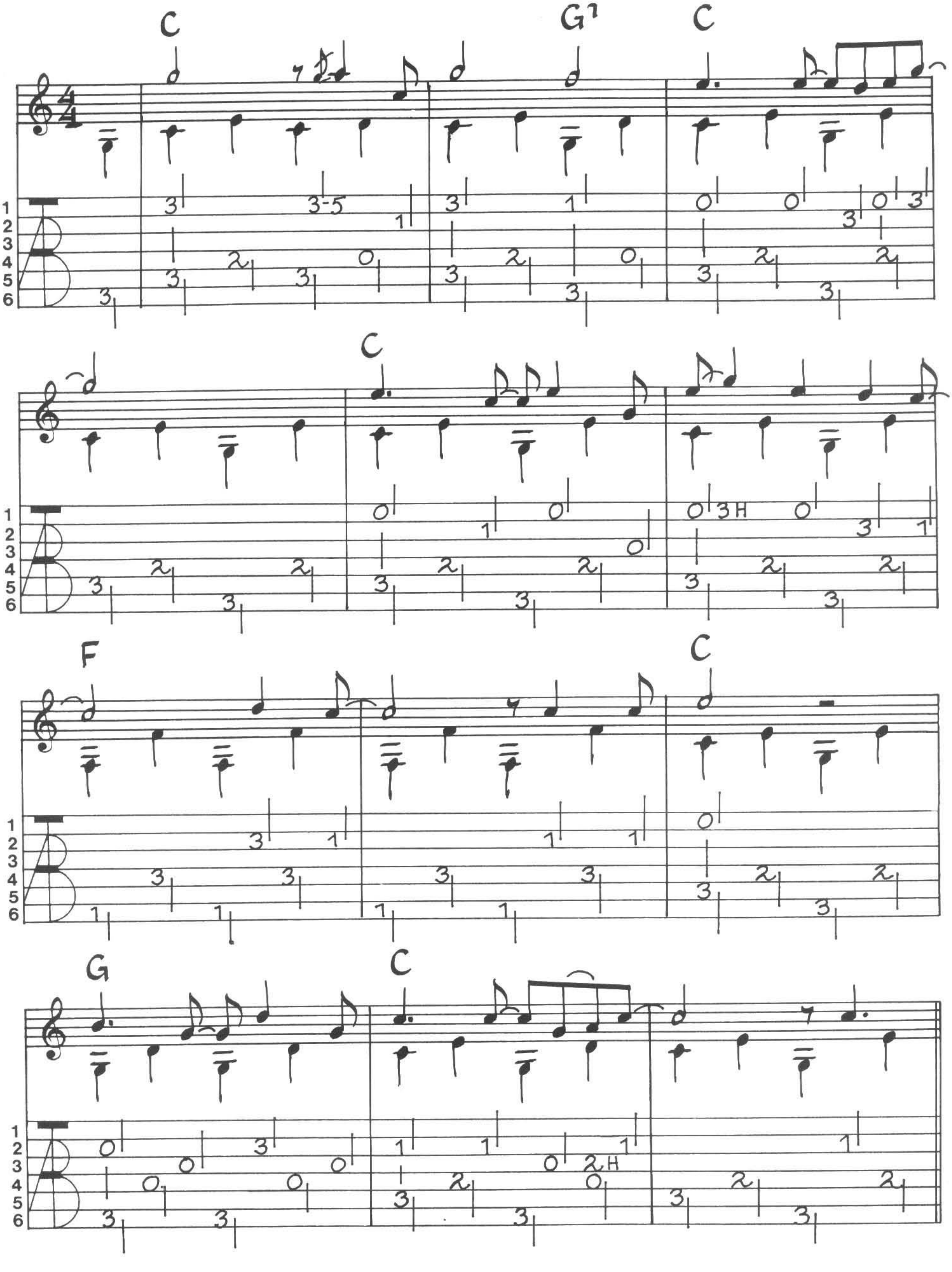
Mrs. Collins weeped, Mrs. Collins moaned
To see her son Louis leavin' home.
The angels laid him away.

The angels laid him away,
They laid him six feet under the clay.
The angels laid him away.

---

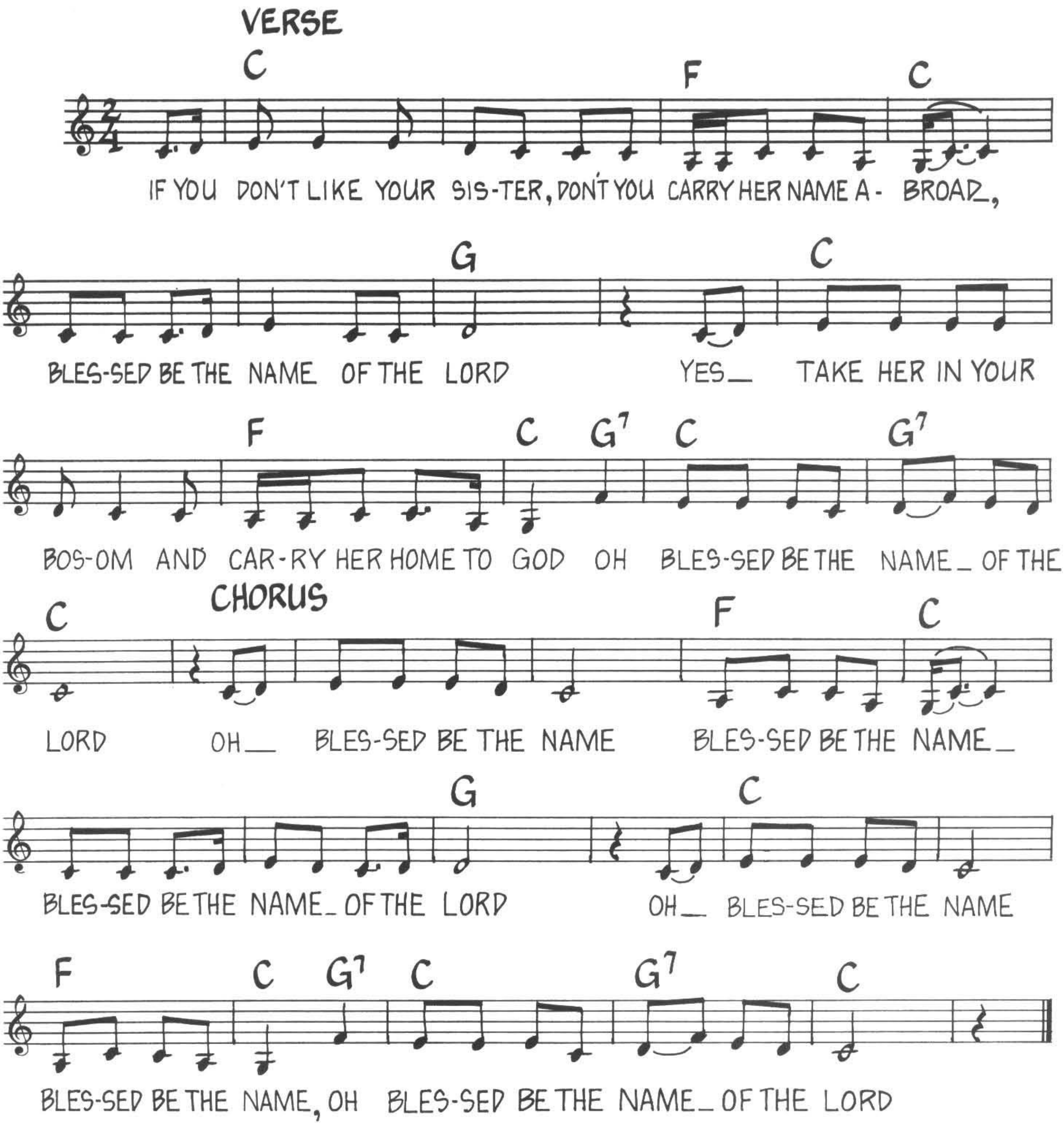
*According to Hurt, this song (his own composition) was based on a true episode.)

LOUIS COLLINS


C
G7
C
C
F
C
G
C
1
2
3
4
5
6
3H
2H

BLESSED BE THE NAME

Trad. Arr. by John Hurt


VERSE
C F C
IF YOU DON'T LIKE YOUR SIS-TER, DON'T YOU CARRY HER NAME A - BROAD,
G C
BLES-SED BE THE NAME OF THE LORD YES_ TAKE HER IN YOUR
F C G7 C G7
BOS-OM AND CAR-RY HER HOME TO GOD OH BLES-SED BE THE NAME_ OF THE
C
CHORUS
F C
LORD OH_ BLES-SED BE THE NAME BLES-SED BE THE NAME_
G C
BLES-SED BE THE NAME_ OF THE LORD OH_ BLES-SED BE THE NAME
F C G7 C G7 C
BLES-SED BE THE NAME, OH BLES-SED BE THE NAME_ OF THE LORD

BLESSED BE THE NAME

1. If you don't like your sister, don't you carry her name abroad.
Blessed be the name of the Lord.
Yes, take her in your bosom and carry her home to God.
Blessed be the name of the Lord.

chorus:
Oh, blessed be the name,
Blessed be the name ,
Blessed be the name of the Lord.
Oh, blessed be the name,
Blessed be the name ,
Oh, blessed be the name of the Lord.

2. If you don't like your brother, don't you carry the name abroad.
Blessed be the name of the Lord.
Just take him in your bosom and carry him home to God.
Oh, blessed be the name of the Lord.

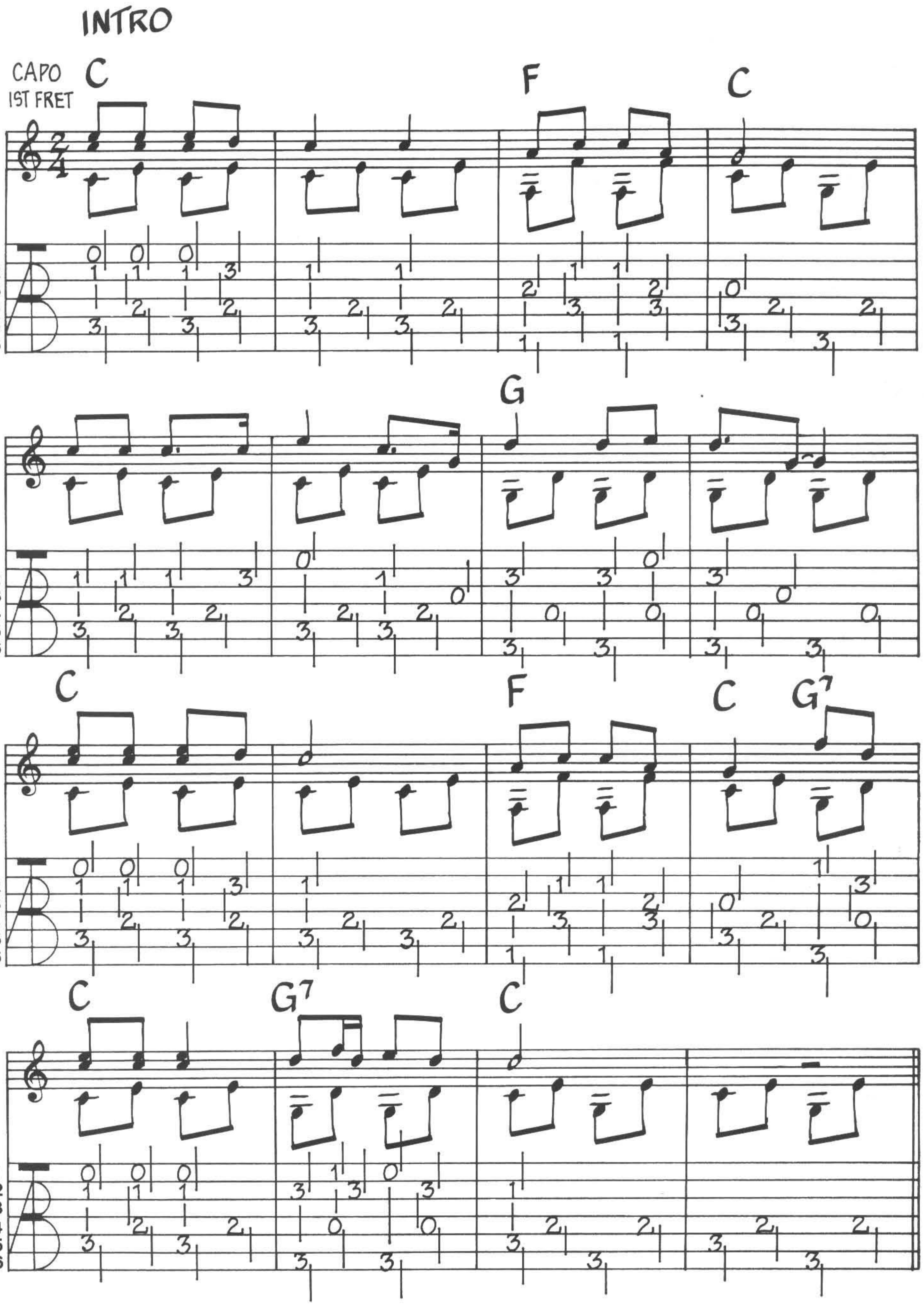
chorus

3. If you don't like your preacher, don't you carry his name abroad.
Blessed be the name of the Lord.
Just take him in your bosom and carry him home to God.
Oh, blessed be the name of the Lord.

chorus

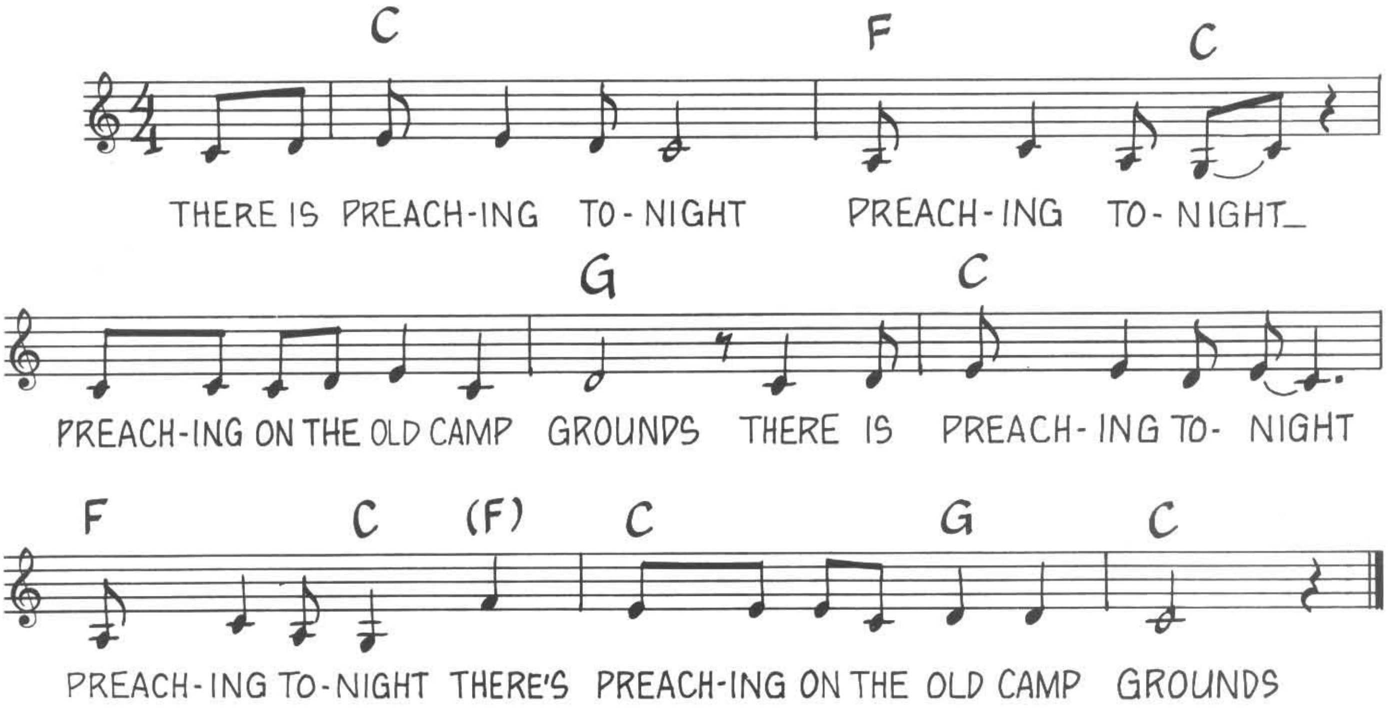
4. If you don't like your deacon, don't you carry his name abroad.
Blessed be the name of the Lord.
Just take him in your bosom and carry him home to God.
Oh, blessed be the name of the Lord.

BLESSED BE THE NAME


INTRO
CAPO
1ST FRET
C
F
C
G
C
F
C
G7
C
G7
C

PRAYING ON THE OLD CAMP GROUNDS

Trad.Arr. by John Hurt


C
F
C
THERE IS PREACH-ING TO-NIGHT PREACH-ING TO-NIGHT
G
C
PREACH-ING ON THE OLD CAMP GROUNDS THERE IS PREACH-ING TO-NIGHT
F
C
(F)
C
G
C
PREACH-ING TO-NIGHT THERE'S PREACH-ING ON THE OLD CAMP GROUNDS

1. There is preaching tonight, preaching tonight.
Preaching on the old camp grounds.
There is preaching tonight, preaching tonight.
Preaching on the old camp grounds.

2. There is singing tonight, singing tonight.
Singing on the old camp grounds.
There is singing tonight, singing tonight.
There is singing on the old camp grounds.

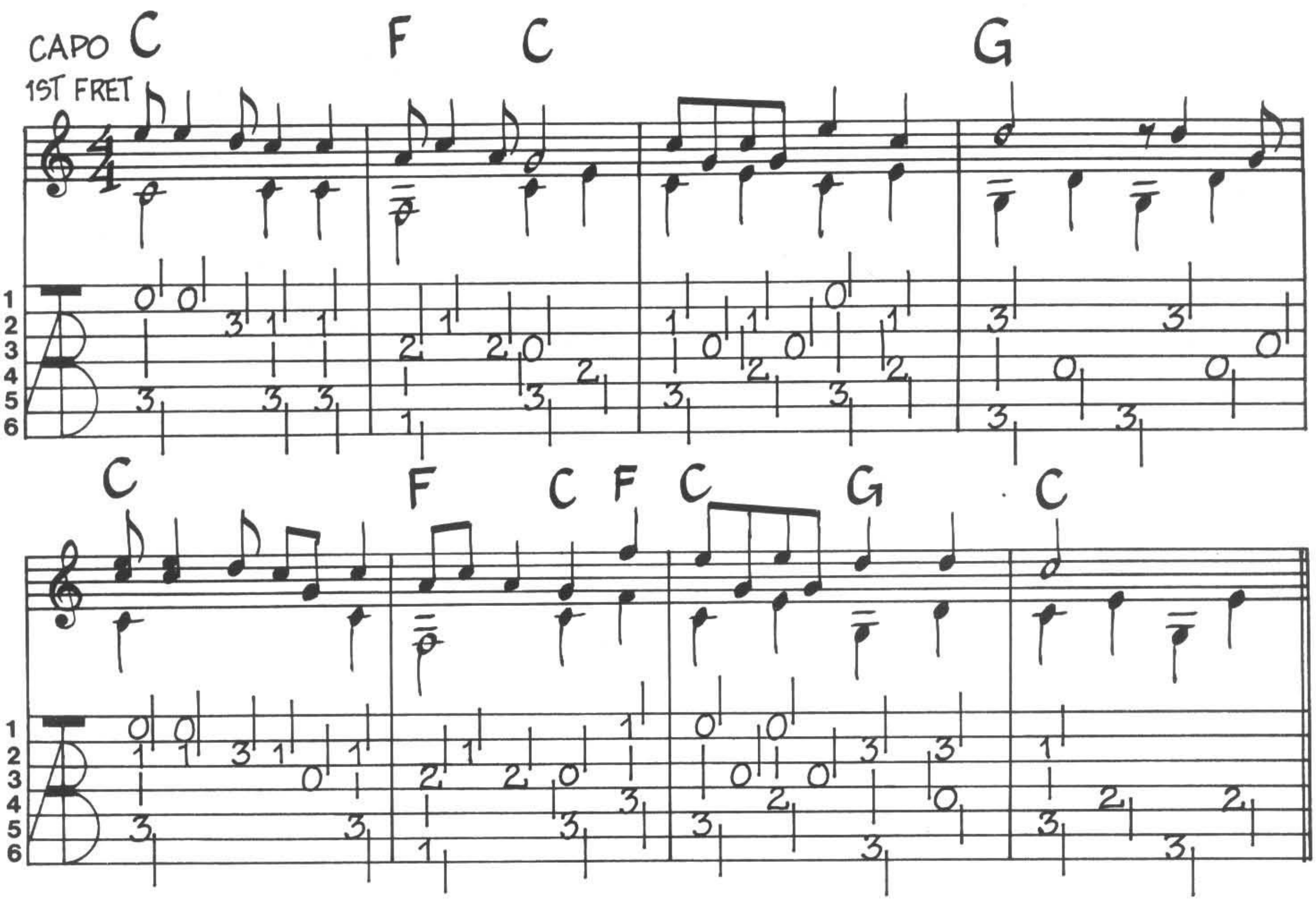
3. There is moaning tonight, moaning tonight.
Moaning on the old camp grounds.
There is moaning tonight, moaning tonight.
There is moaning on the old camp grounds.

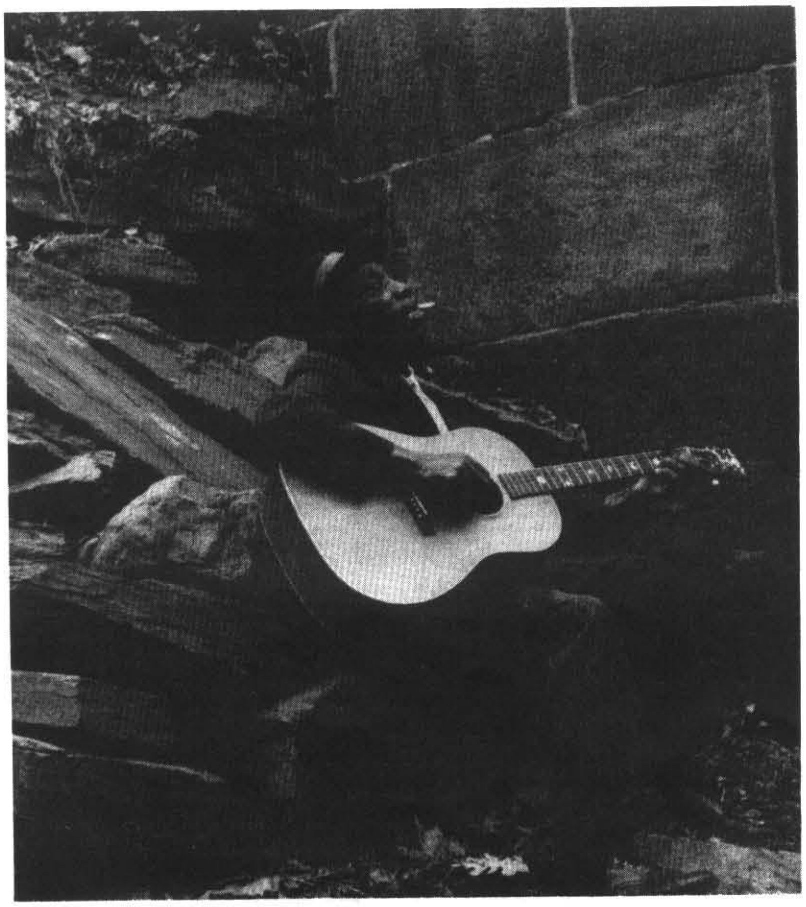
4. There is preaching tonight, preaching tonight.
Preaching on the old camp grounds.
There is preaching tonight, preaching tonight.
Preaching on the old camp grounds.

5. There is praying tonight, praying tonight.
Praying on the old camp grounds.
There is praying tonight, praying tonight.
There is praying on the old camp grounds.

PRAYING ON THE OLD CAMP GROUNDS

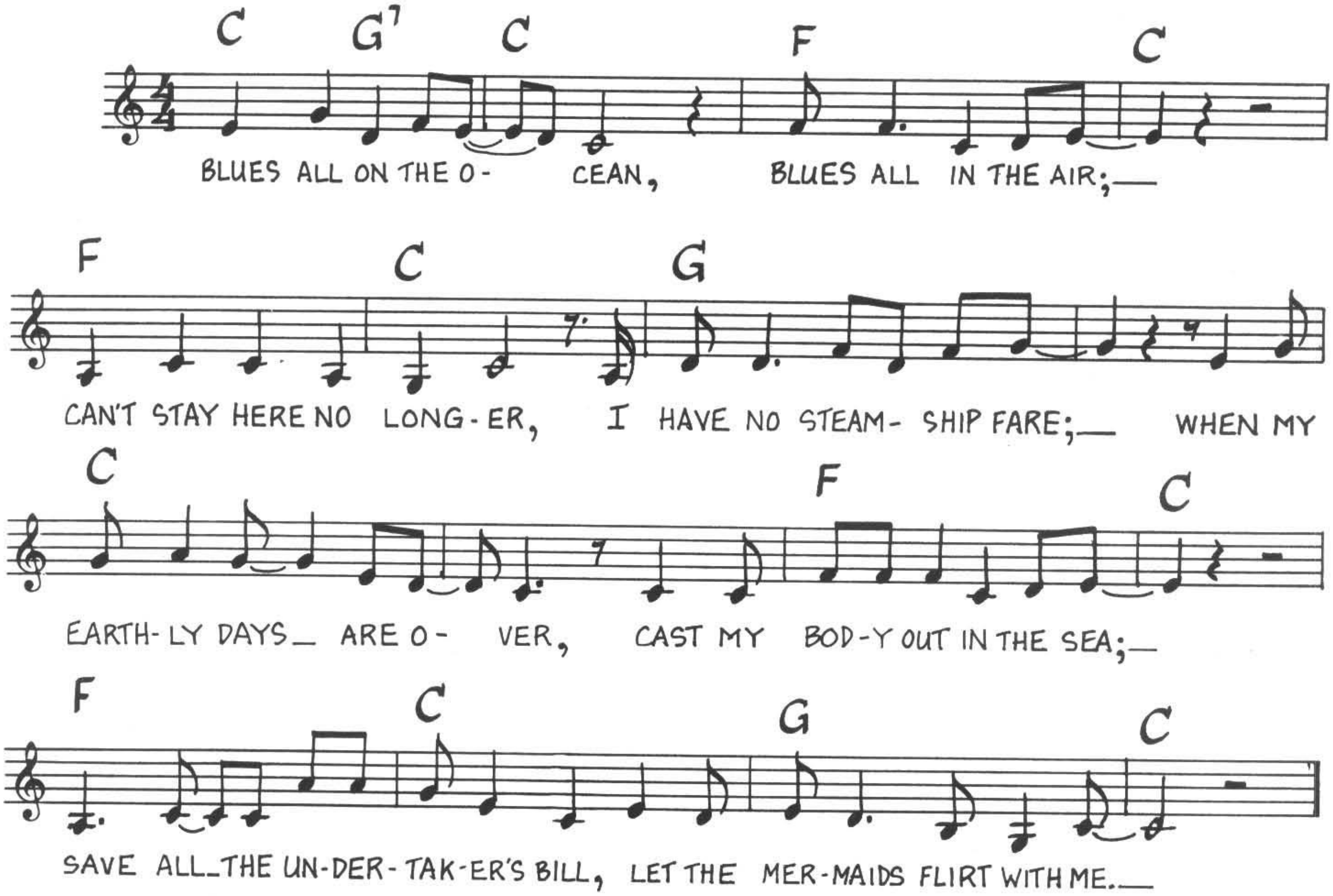
INTRO


CAPO 1ST FRET
C
F
C
G
C
F
C
F
C
G
C



LET THE MERMAIDS FLIRT WITH ME

by John Hurt


C G7 C F C
BLUES ALL ON THE O- CEAN, BLUES ALL IN THE AIR;—
F C G
CAN'T STAY HERE NO LONG-ER, I HAVE NO STEAM- SHIP FARE;— WHEN MY
C F C
EARTH-LY DAYS— ARE O- VER, CAST MY BOD-Y OUT IN THE SEA;—
F C G C
SAVE ALL—THE UN-DER-TAK-ER'S BILL, LET THE MER-MAIDS FLIRT WITH ME.—

Blues all on the ocean, blues all in the air.
Can't stay here no longer, I have no steamship fare.
When my earthly trials are over, carry my body out in the sea.
Save all the undertaker bills, let the mermaids flirt with me.

I do not work for pleasure, earthly peace I'll see no more.
The only reason I work at all, is drive the world from my door.
When my earthly trials are over, carry my body out in the sea.
Save all the undertaker bills, let the mermaids flirt with me.

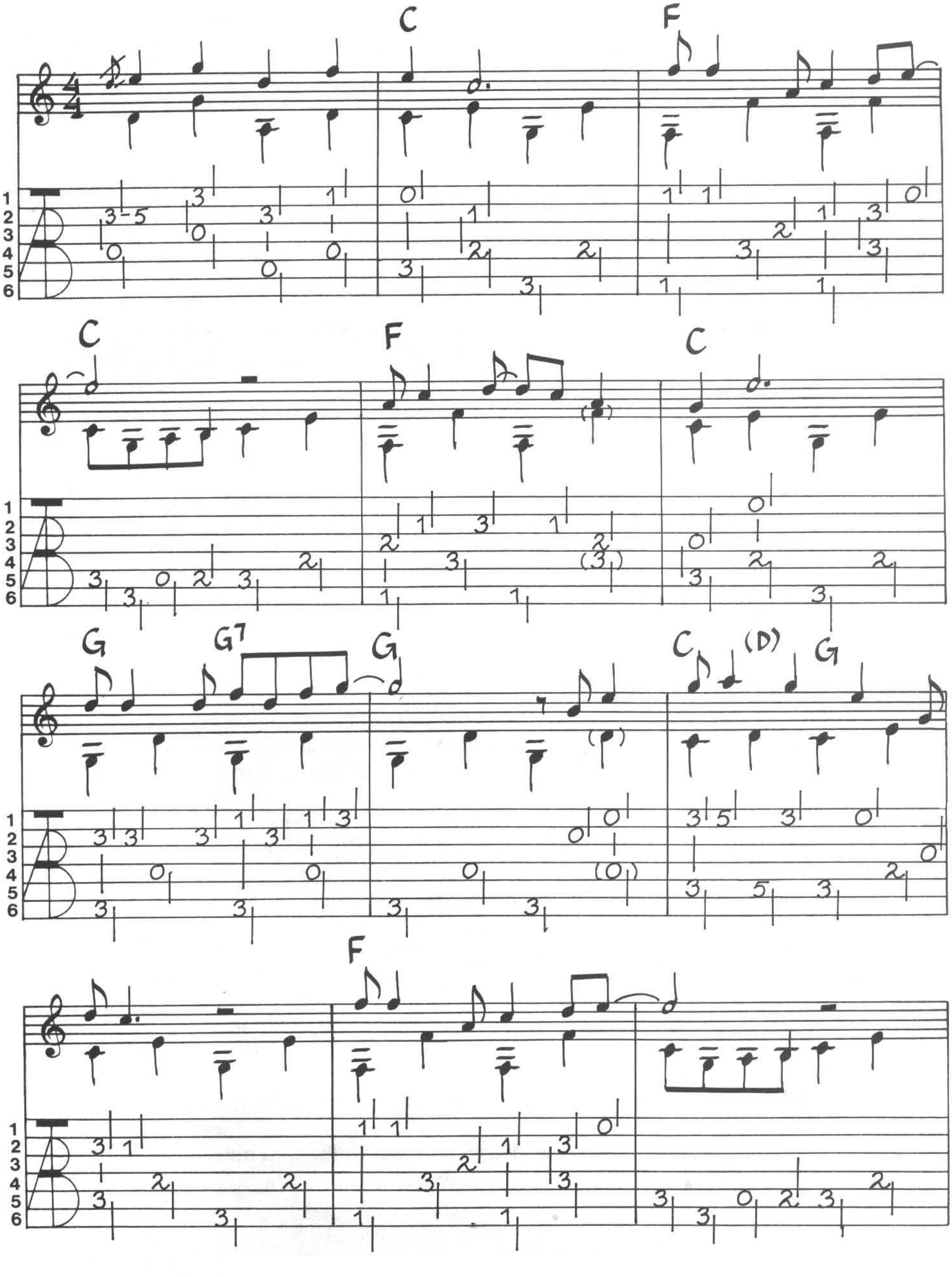
My wife controls our happy home, a sweetheart I can not find.
The only thing I can call my own, is a troubled and a worried mind.
When my earthly trials are over, carry my body out in the sea.
Save all the undertaker bills, let the mermaids flirt with me.

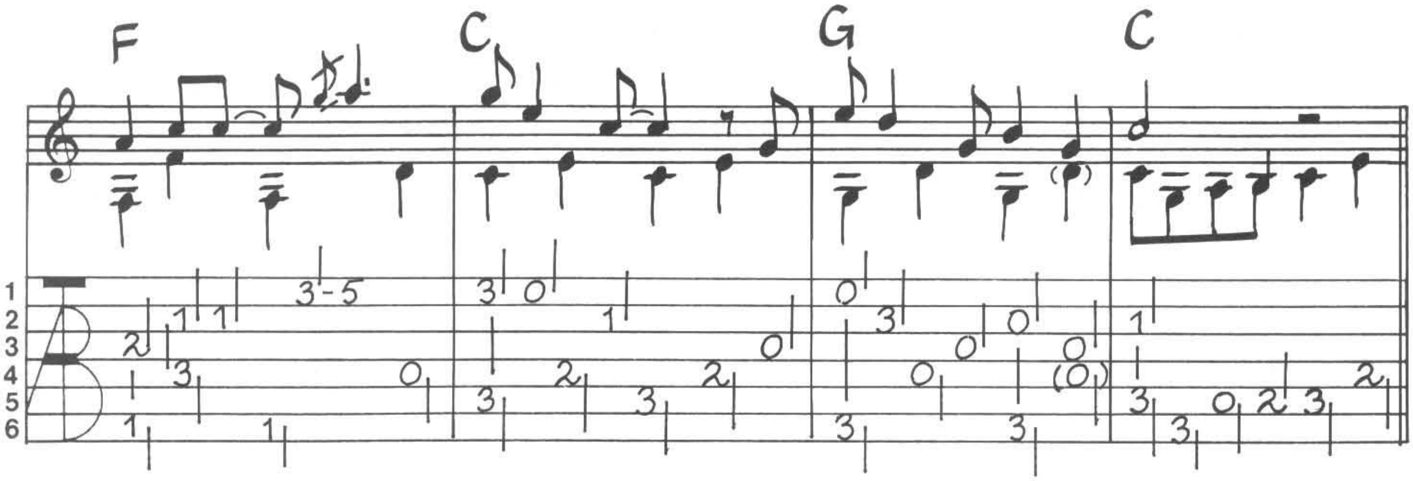
Blues all in my body, my darling has forsaken me.
If I ever see her face again, I have to swim across the sea.
When my earthly trials are over, carry my body out in the sea.
Save all the undertaker bills, let the mermaids flirt with me.

Repeat first verse.

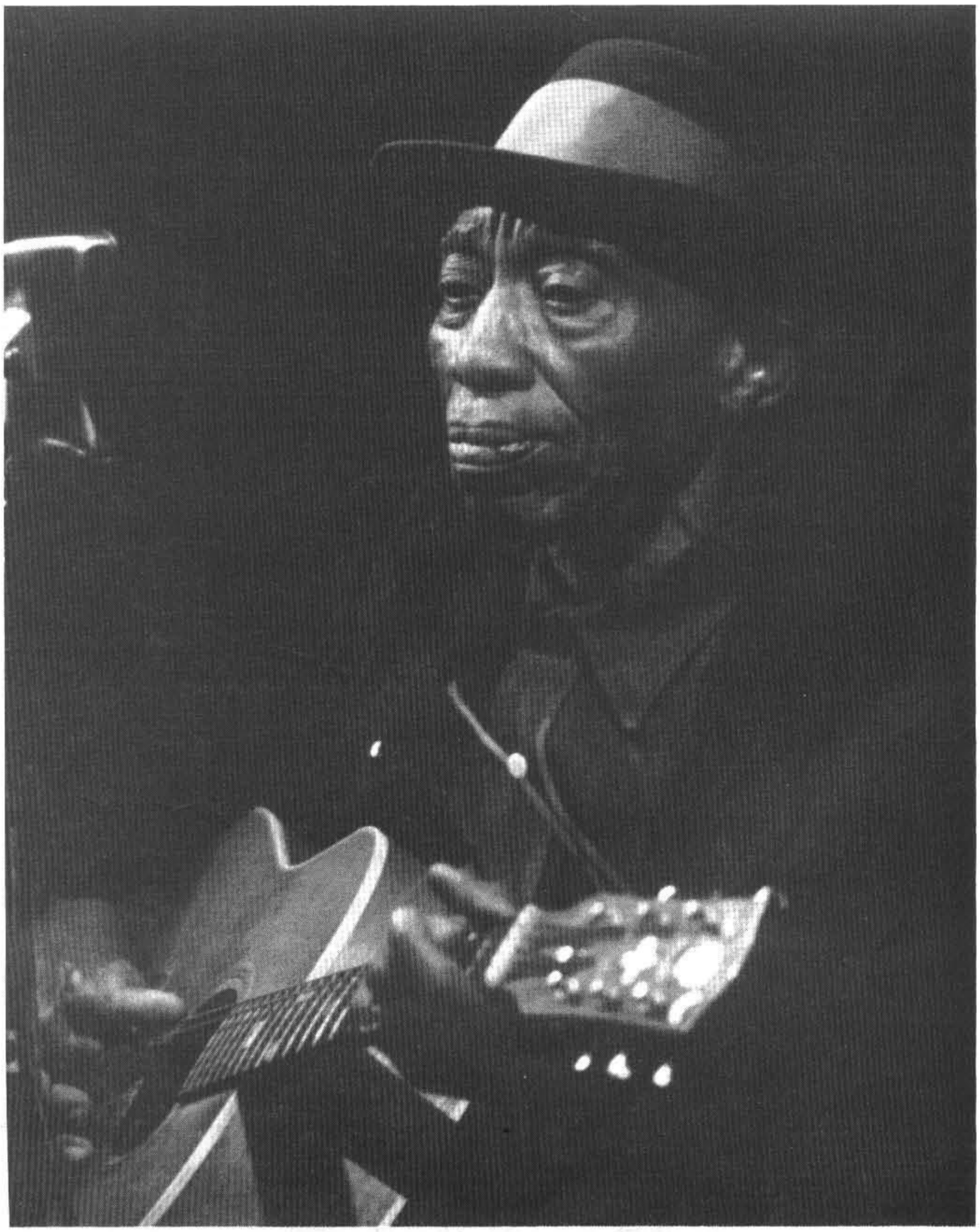
LET THE MERMAIDS FLIRT WITH ME

INTRO


C
F
C
F
C
G
G7
G
C
(D)
G
F

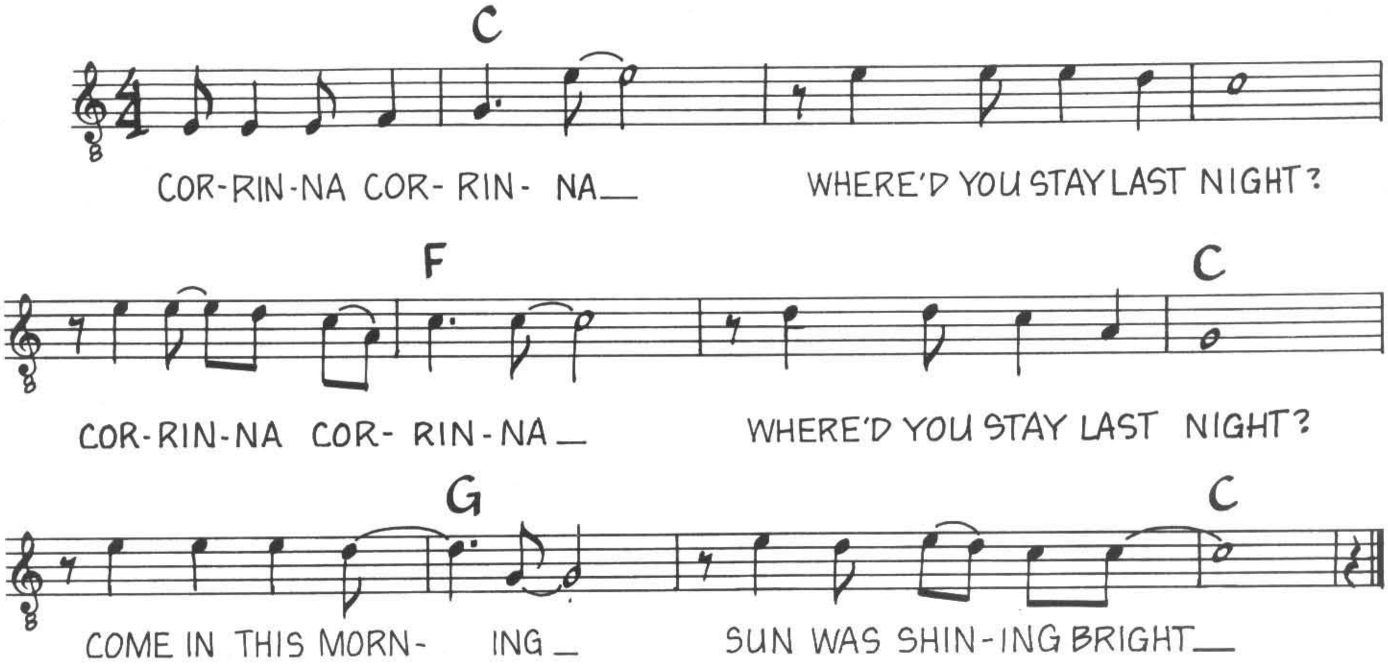

F
C
G
C
1
2
3
4
5
6

N.B. Notes in parantheses are NOT played in INTRO, but are played throughout the rest of the piece.



CORRINNA, CORRINNA

by John Hurt


C
COR-RIN-NA COR-RIN- NA__ WHERE'D YOU STAY LAST NIGHT?
F
C
COR-RIN-NA COR-RIN-NA__ WHERE'D YOU STAY LAST NIGHT?
G
C
COME IN THIS MORN- ING__ SUN WAS SHIN-ING BRIGHT__

1. Corrinna, Corrinna, where'd you stay last night?
   Corrinna, Corrinna, where'd you stay last night?
   Come in this morning, sun was shining bright.

2. I left Corrinna, across the sea.
   I left Corrinna, way across the sea.
   She won't write no letter, she don't care for me.

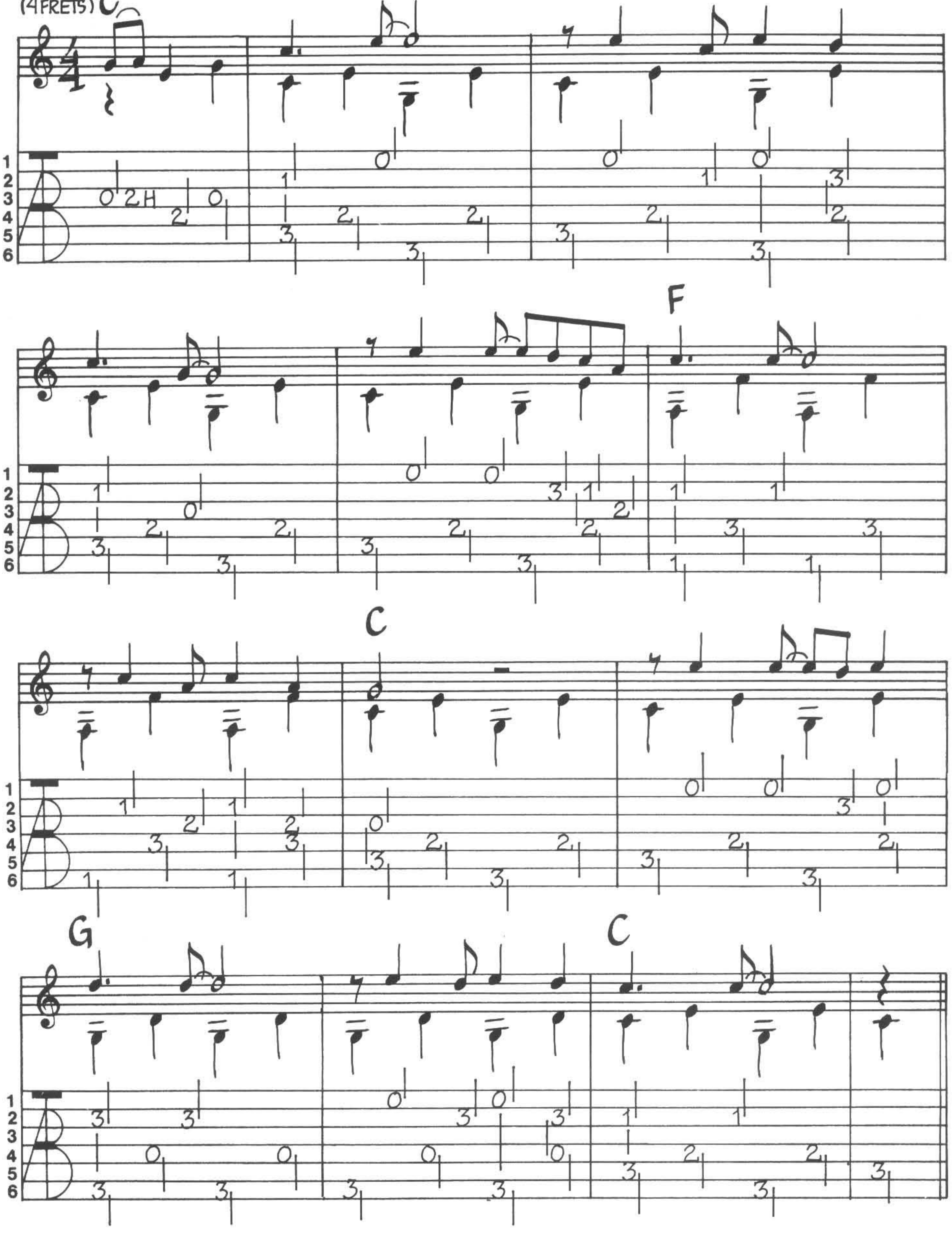
3. Repeat first verse

4. Corrinna, Corrinna...
   I love Corrinna, tell the world I do.
   Don't love nobody, in this world but you.

CORRINNA, CORRINNA

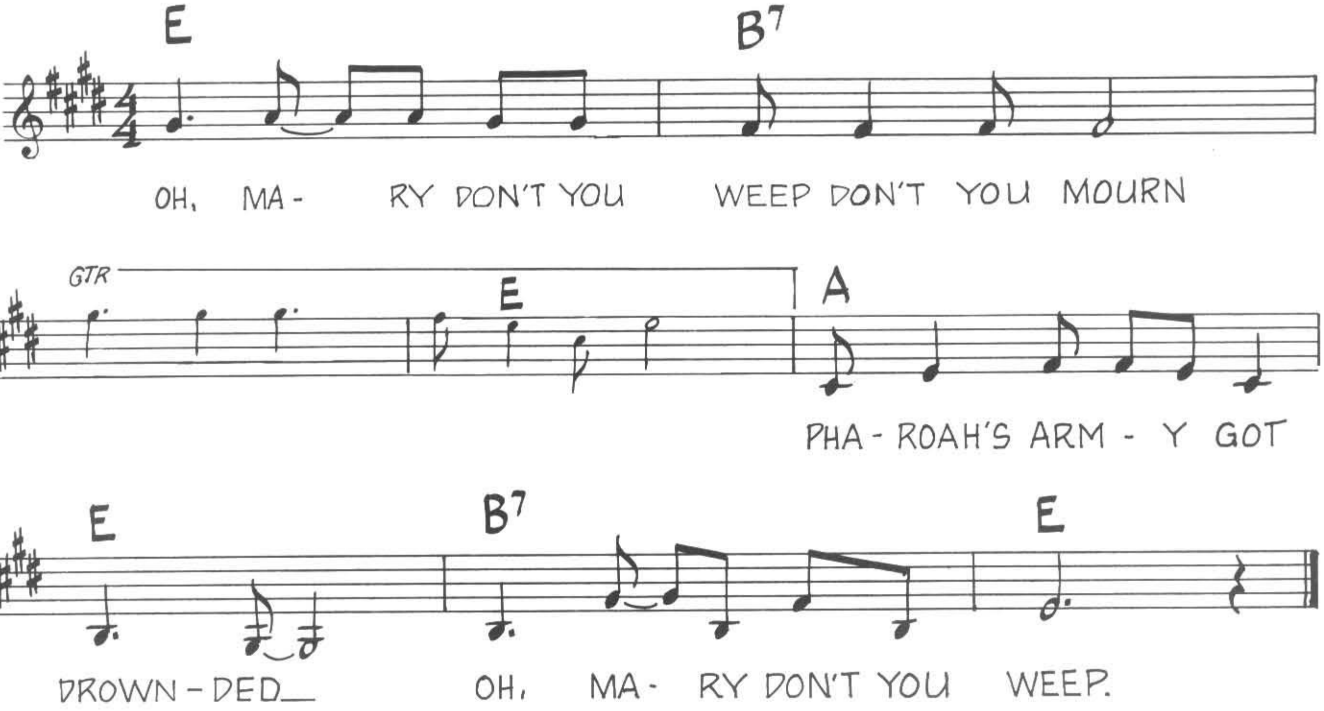
TUNED 2
TONES
DOWN
(4FRETS)

FIRST GUITAR BREAK



OH MARY DON'T YOU WEEP

by John Hurt


E
B7
OH, MA- RY DON'T YOU WEEP DON'T YOU MOURN
GTR
E
A
PHA-ROAH'S ARM - Y GOT
E
B7
E
DROWN-DED__ OH, MA- RY DON'T YOU WEEP.

1. Oh, Mary don't you weep, don't you mourn.
   Pharoah's army got drownded,
   Oh, Mary don't you weep.

2. If I could, I surely would,
   Stand on the rock where Moses stood.
   Pharoah's army got drownded,
   Oh, Mary don't you weep.

3. Mary weep, Martha moaned,
   All around God's holy strong.
   Pharoah's army got drownded,
   Oh, Mary don't you weep.

4. Well, God told Noah about the rainbow sound.
   No more water but the God makes...
   Pharoah's army got drownded,
   Oh, Mary don't you weep.

5. Repeat first verse.

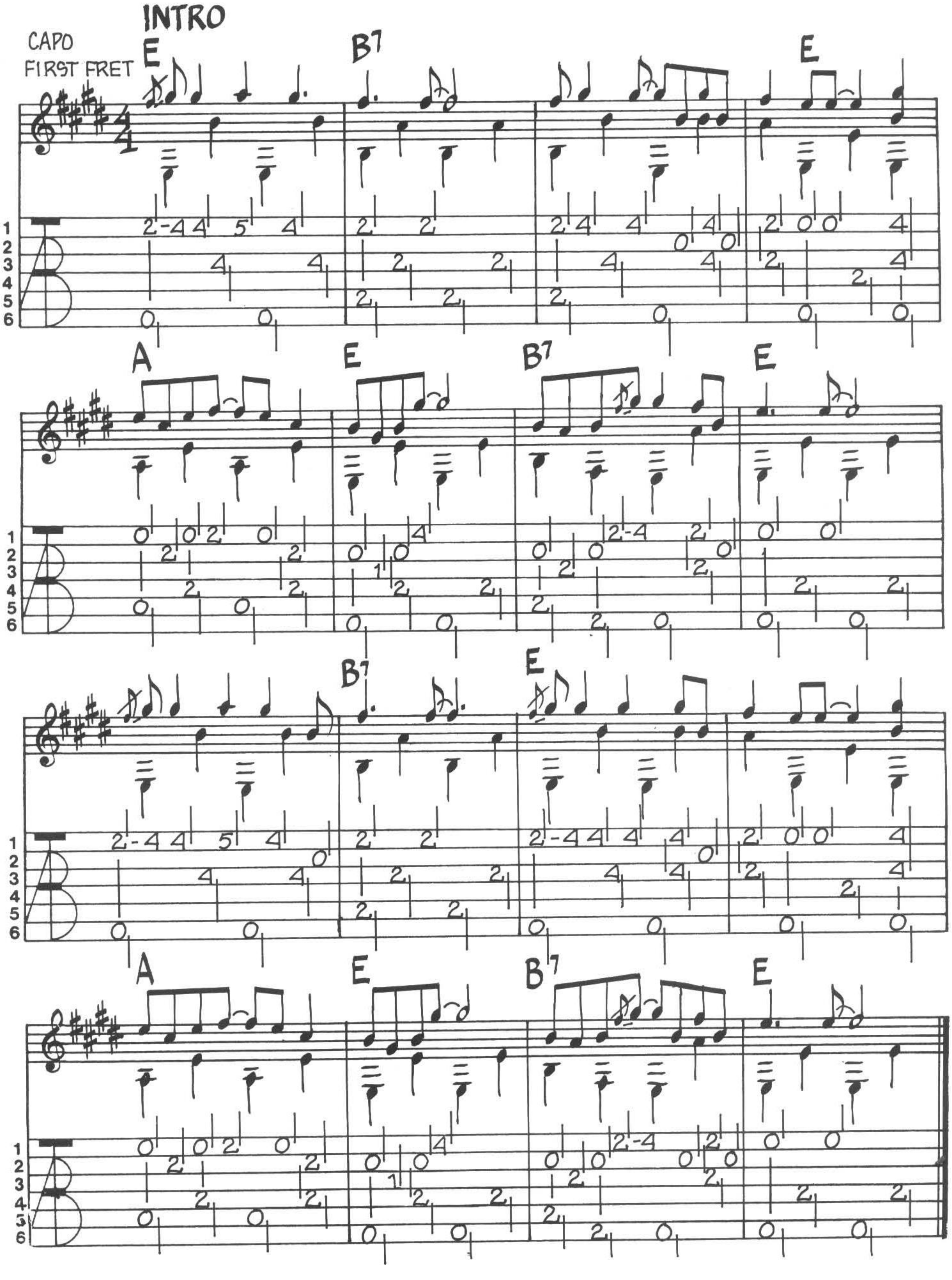
6. Sinners don't come by the ...
   No need to come when the train done gone.
   Pharoah's army got drownded,
   Oh, Mary don't you weep.

7. Repeat first verse.

8. One of these days about 12 o'clock,
   This ol' world gonna reel and rock.
   Pharoah's army got drownded,
   Oh, Mary don't you weep.

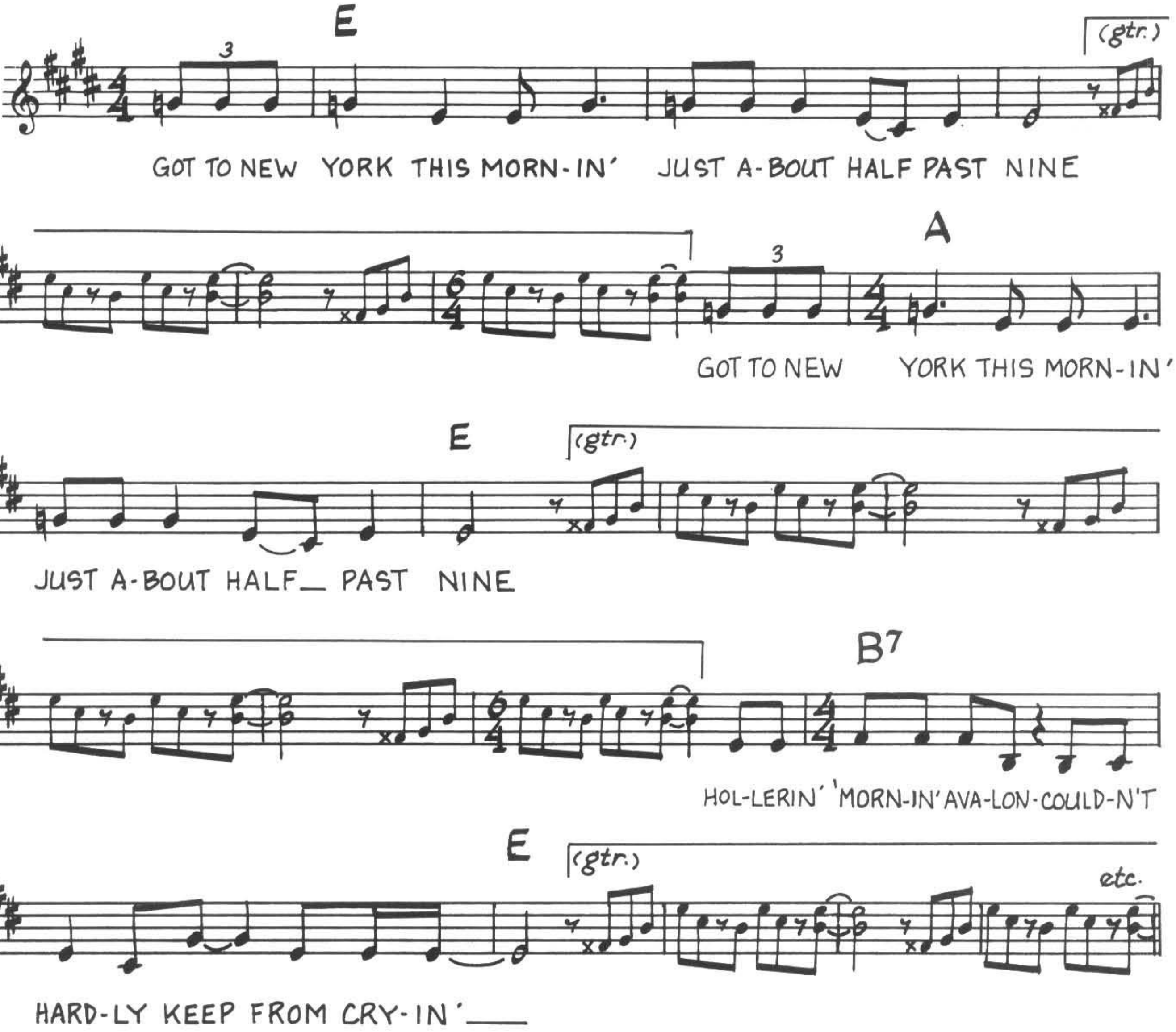
9. Repeat first verse.

OH MARY DON'T YOU WEEP


INTRO
CAPO
FIRST FRET
E
B7
E
A
E
B7
E
B7
E
A
E
B7
E
1
2
3
4
5
6

AVALON BLUES

by John Hurt


E
(gtr.)
GOT TO NEW YORK THIS MORN-IN' JUST A-BOUT HALF PAST NINE
A
GOT TO NEW YORK THIS MORN-IN'
E
(gtr.)
JUST A-BOUT HALF_ PAST NINE
B7
HOL-LERIN' 'MORN-IN' AVA-LON-COULD-N'T
E
(gtr.)
etc.
HARD-LY KEEP FROM CRY-IN'___

Got to New York this mornin', just about half-past nine, (twice)
Hollerin' one mornin' in Avalon, couldn't hardly keep from cryin'.

Avalon is my hometown, always on my mind,(twice)
Pretty mamas in Avalon want me there all the time.

When the train left Avalon, throwin' kisses and wavin' at me, (twice)
Says, "Come back, daddy, and stay right here with me."

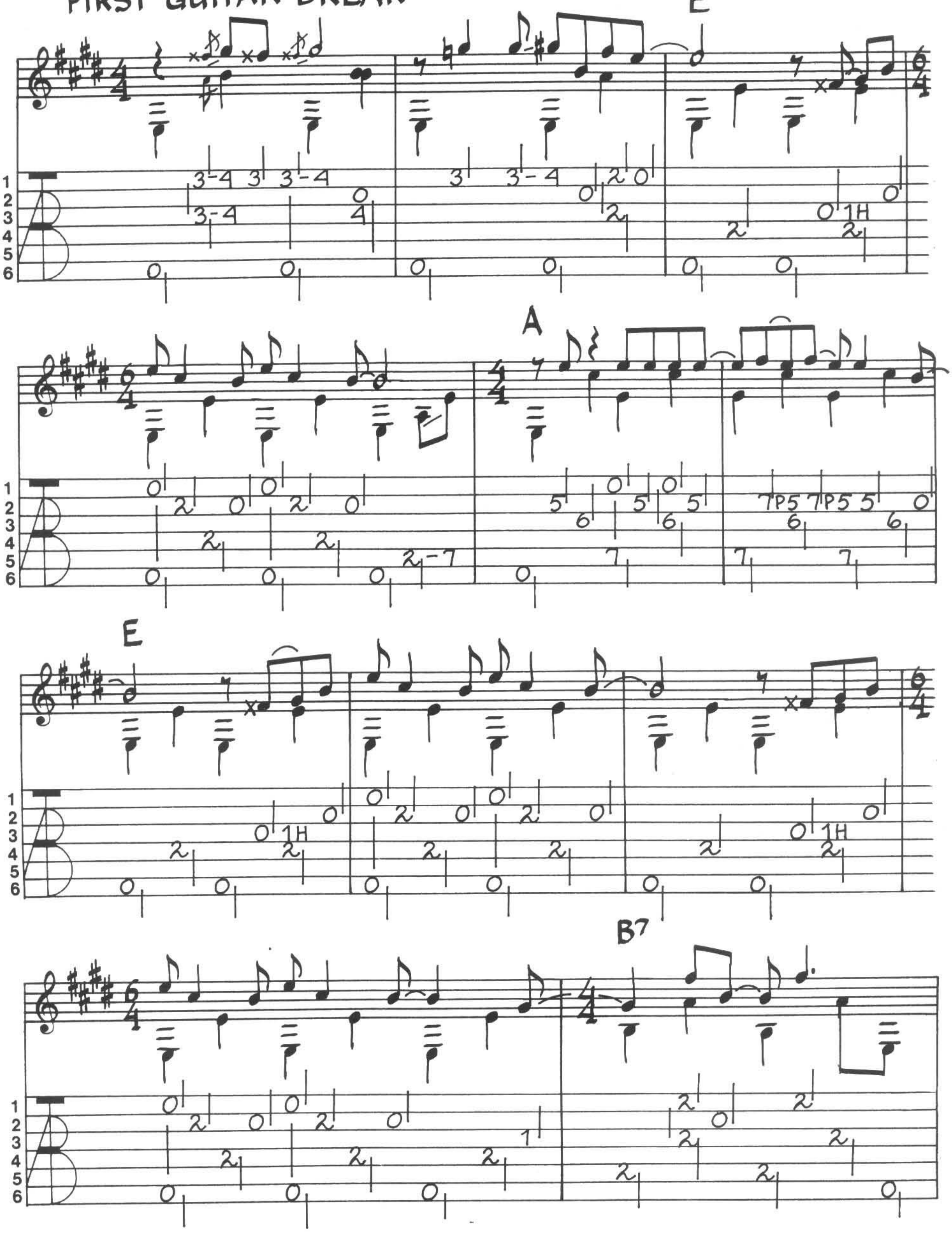
Avalon's a small town, have no great big range, (twice)
Pretty mamas in Avalon, they sure will spend your change.

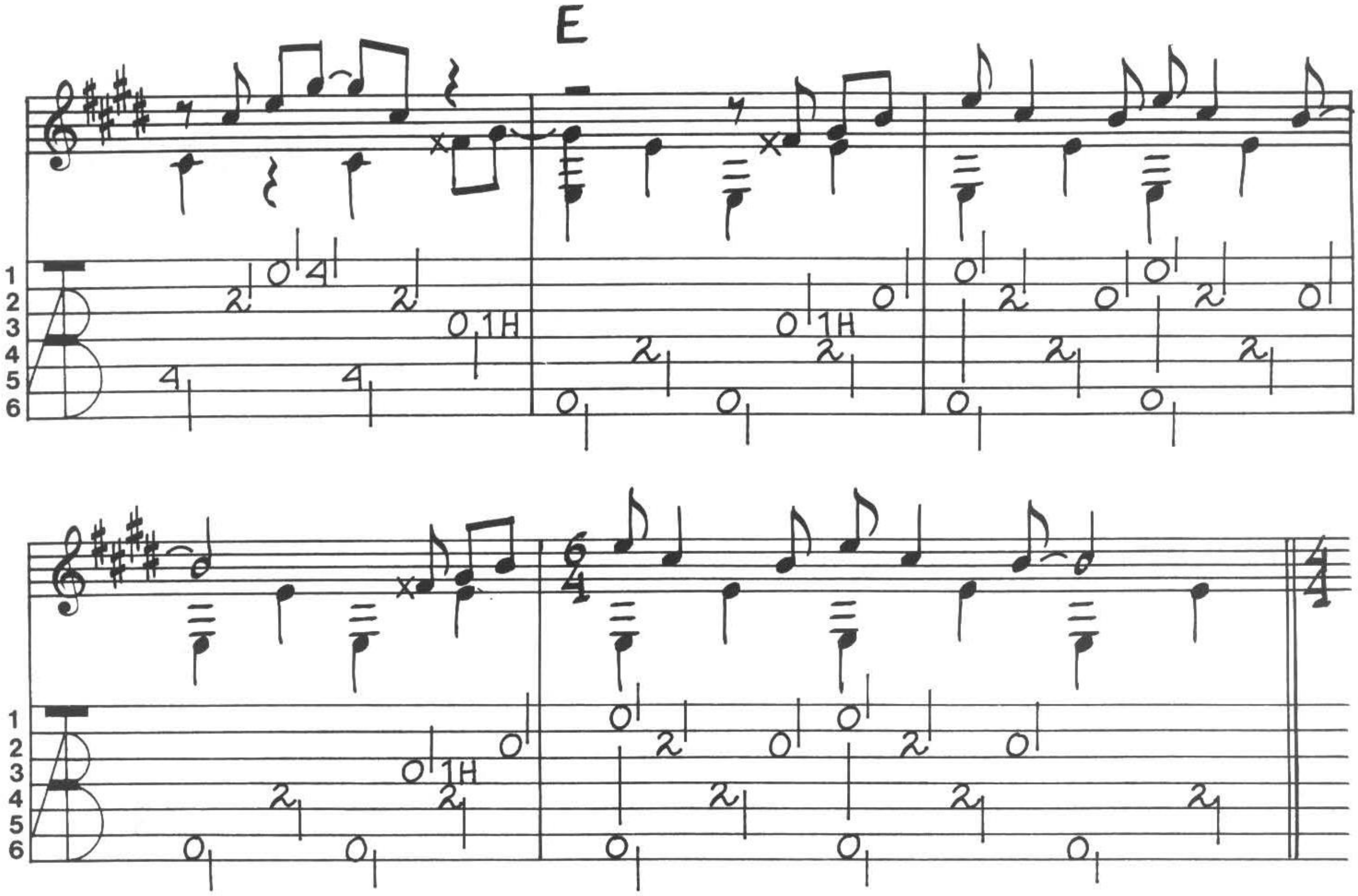
New York's a good town, but it's not for mine, (twice)
Goin' back to Avalon, near where I have a pretty mama all the time.

*The occasion of this song was Hurt's 1928 visit to New York for an Okeh recording session.

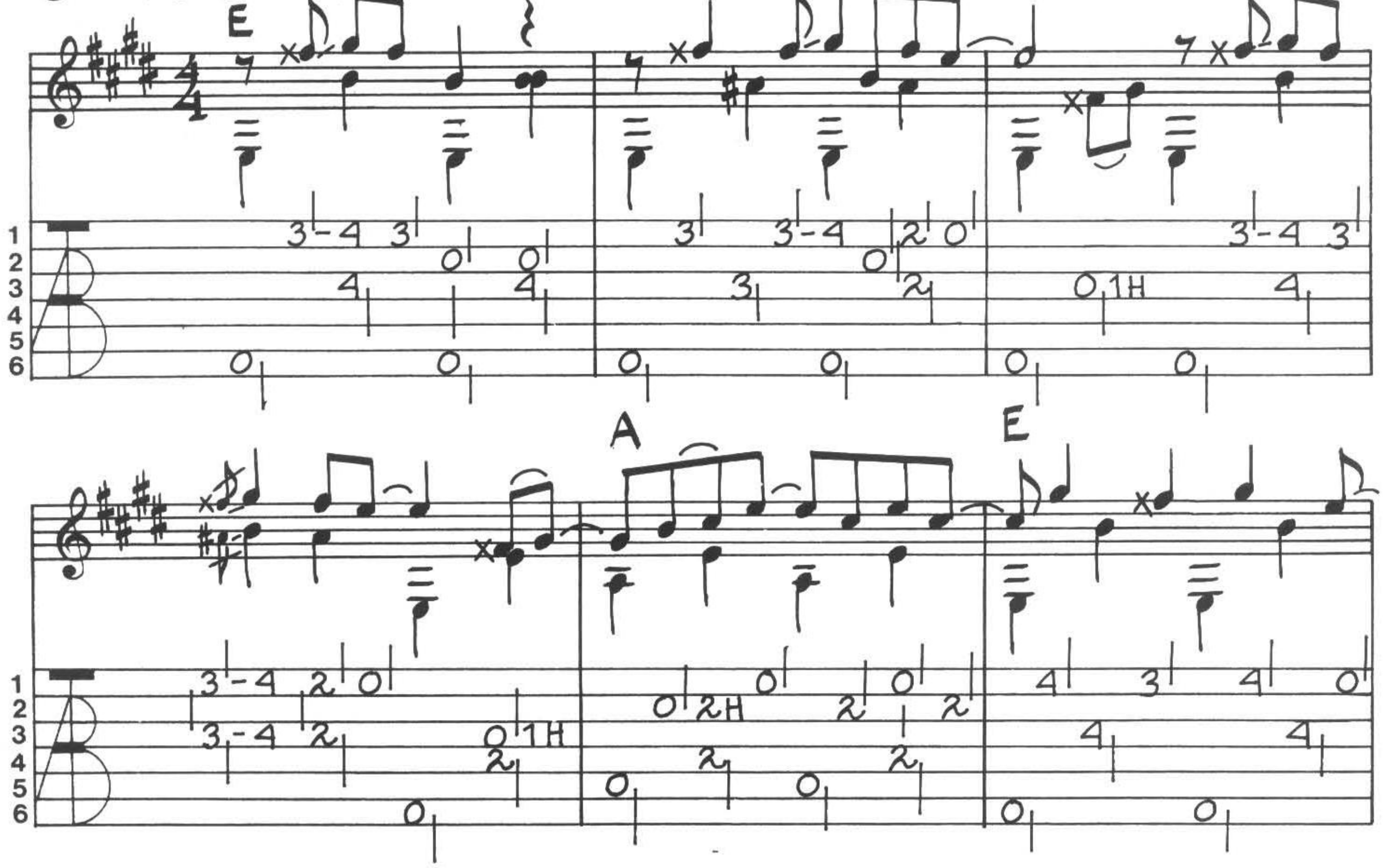
AVALON BLUES

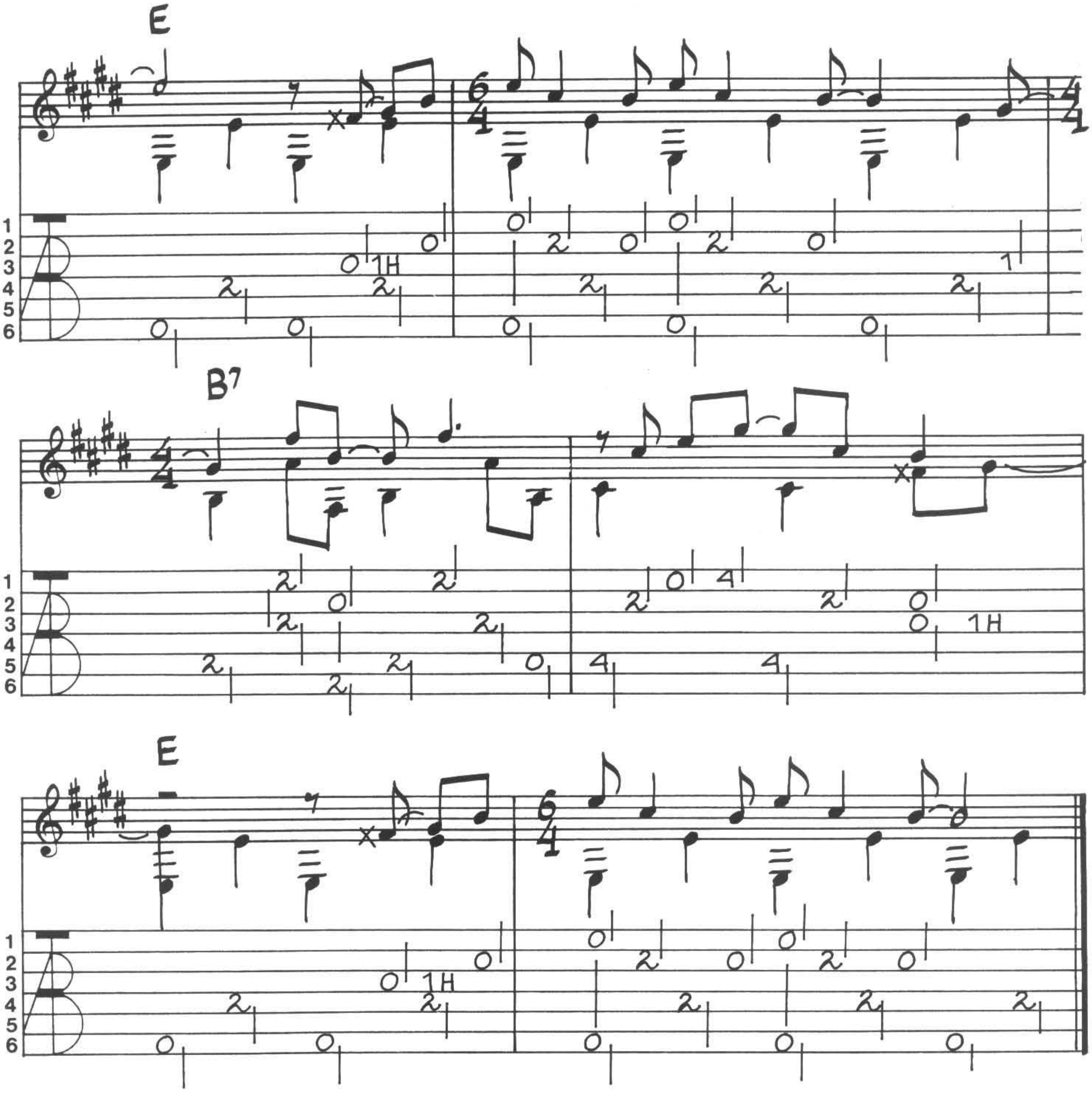
FIRST GUITAR BREAK


E
A
E
B7
1H
7P5
1H
1H



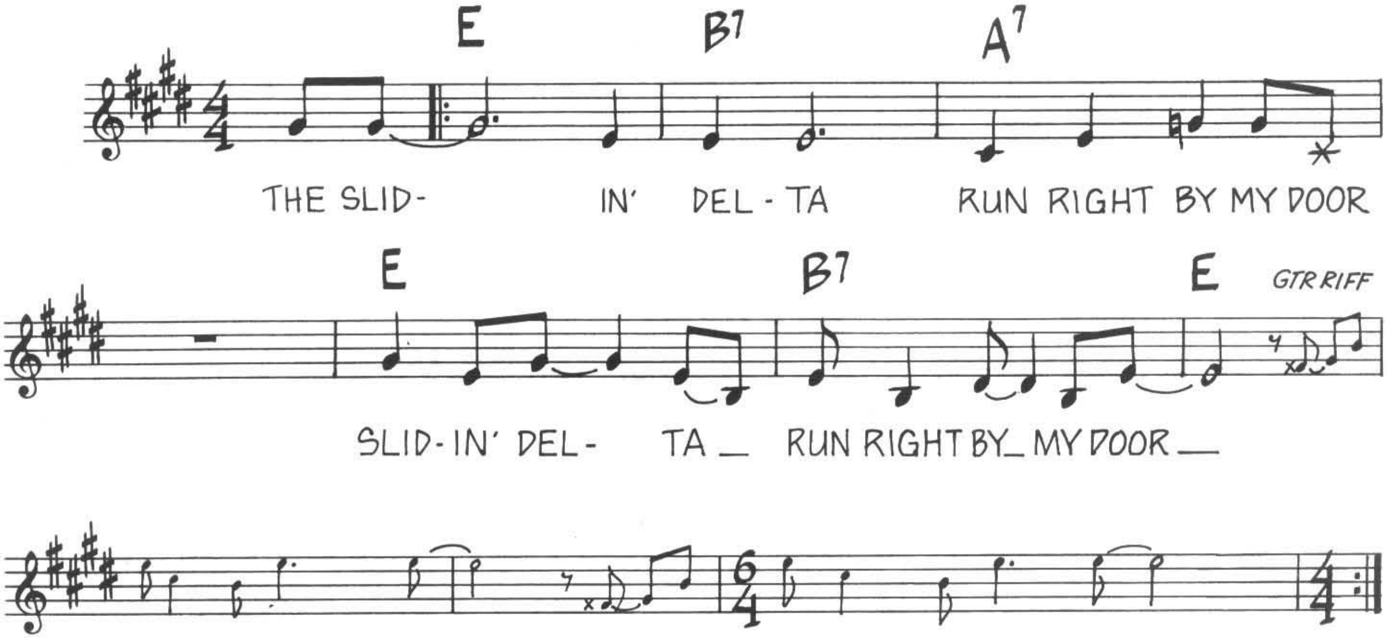
SECOND GUITAR BREAK




E
B7
E
1H

SLIDING DELTA

by John Hurt


E
B7
A7
THE SLID- IN' DEL - TA RUN RIGHT BY MY DOOR
E
B7
E
GTR RIFF
SLID-IN' DEL- TA _ RUN RIGHT BY _ MY DOOR _

The Sliding Delta run right by my door.
Sliding Delta run right by my door.

I'm going up the country, and baby don't you wanna go;
I'm going up the country, baby don't you wanna go.

I'm going up the country, I ain't coming back no more;
I'm going up the country, and I ain't coming back no more;

The big Kate Allen, got ways just like a man.
It'll steal your baby everytime she lands.

I said, "The big Kate Allen, got ways just like a man;
Steal your baby everytime she lands."

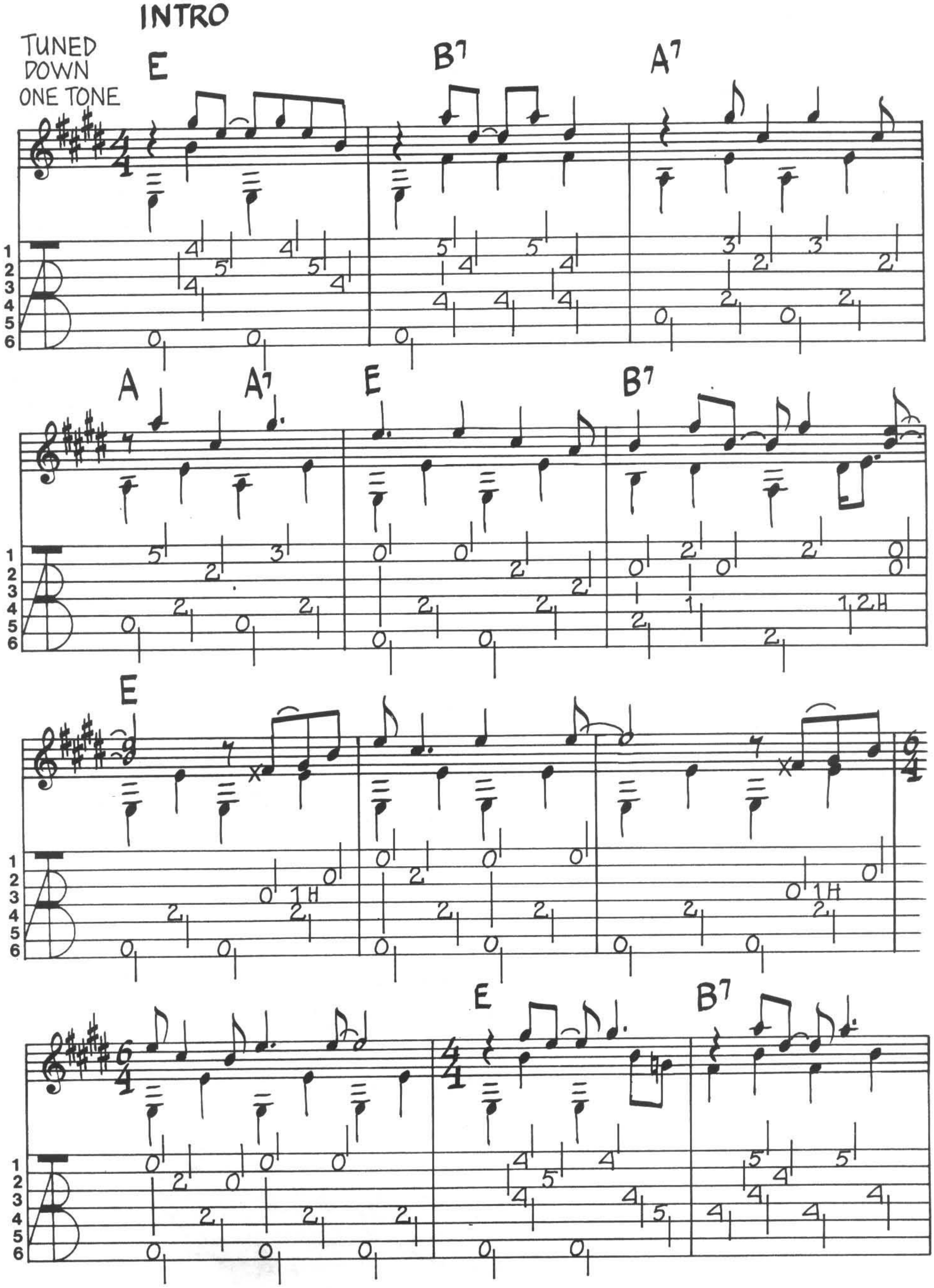
The Sliding Delta run right by my door.
Sliding Delta run right by my door.

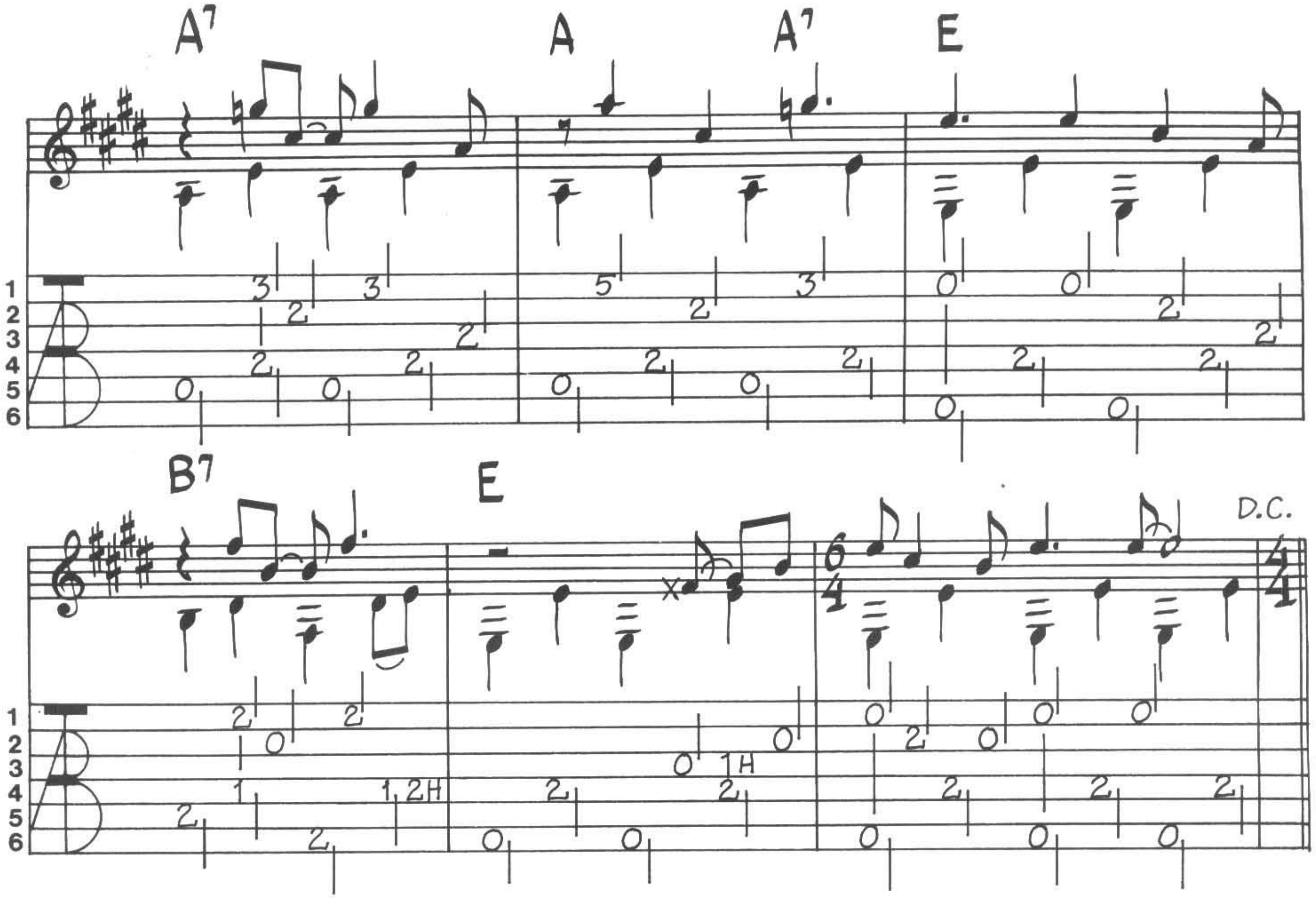
My suitcase is packed, and my trunk's already gone.
I can't sleep baby when the world is waitin' on.

I said, "I'm going up the country, don't you wanna go;
Going up the country, and I ain't coming back no more."

Note: The "Sliding Delta" was Mississippi steam boat.

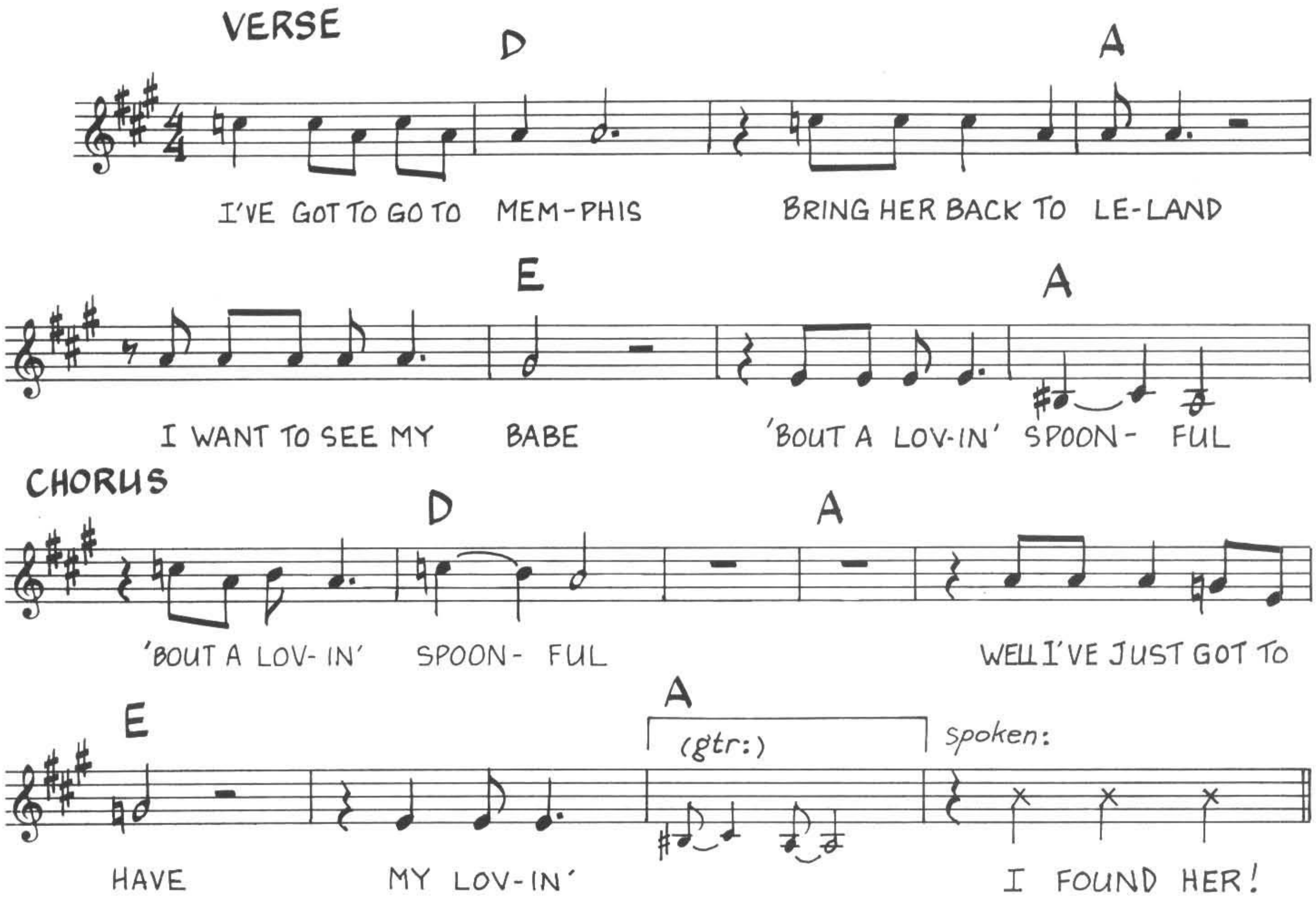
SLIDING DELTA

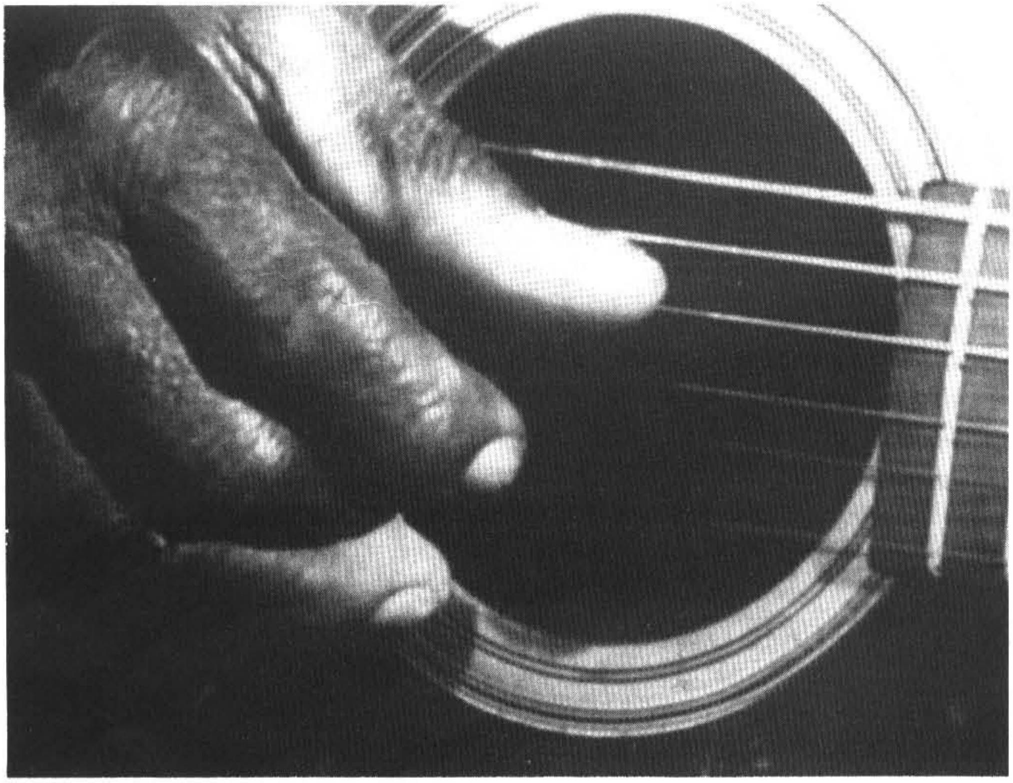

INTRO
TUNED
DOWN
ONE TONE
E
B7
A7
A
A7
E
B7
E
E
B7
1 2 H
1 H
1 H


A7
A
A7
E
B7
E
D.C.

COFFEE BLUES

by John Hurt


VERSE
D
A
I'VE GOT TO GO TO MEM-PHIS
BRING HER BACK TO LE-LAND
E
A
I WANT TO SEE MY BABE
'BOUT A LOV-IN' SPOON- FUL
CHORUS
D
A
'BOUT A LOV- IN' SPOON- FUL
WELL I'VE JUST GOT TO
E
A
(gtr:)
spoken:
HAVE
MY LOV-IN'
I FOUND HER!



COFFEE BLUES

Spoken:
This is the "Coffee Blues," I likes a certain brand–Maxwell's House–it's good till the last drop, just like it says on the can. I used to have a girl cookin' a good Maxwell House. She moved away. Some said to Memphis and some said to Leland, * but I found her. I Wanted her to cook me some good Maxwell's House. You understand, if I cant get me just a spoonful† of Maxwell's House, do me much good as two or three cups this other coffee.

I've got to go to Memphis, bring her back
to Leland,
I wanna see my baby 'bout a lovin' spoonful,
My lovin' spoonful.
Well, I'm just got to have my lovin' . . .

Spoken:
I found her.

"Good mornin', baby, how you do this mornin'?
Well, please, ma'm, just a lovin' spoon . . .
Just a lovin' spoonful.
I declare, I Got to have my lovin' spoonful."

My baby packed her suitcase and she went away.
I couldn't let her stay for my lovin' . . .
My lovin' spoonful,
Well, I'm just got to have my lovin' . . .

"Good mornin', baby, how you do this mornin?"
Well, please, ma'am, just a lovin' spoon . . .
Just a lovin' spoonful,
Well, I'm just got to have my lovin' . . .

Well, the preacher in the pulpit, jumpin'
up and down,
He laid his Bible down for his lovin' . . .
(Spoken: Ain't Maxwell House all right?)
Well, I'm just got to have my lovin' . . .

You can bring me whiskey, you can bring
me tea,
Nothin' satisfies me, man, but
my lovin' spoonful,
My lovin' . . .
Well, I'm just got to have my lovin' . . .

"Good mornin' baby, how you do this mornin'?
Well, please, ma'am, just a lovin' . . .
Just a lovin' spoonful."
Makes things all right, with a lovin' . . .

When your babgets mad and she won't do right,
Go to bed at night, get a lovin' . . .
Well, a lovin' spoonful.
Well, a lovin' spoonful.
Well, I'm just got to have my lovin' . . .

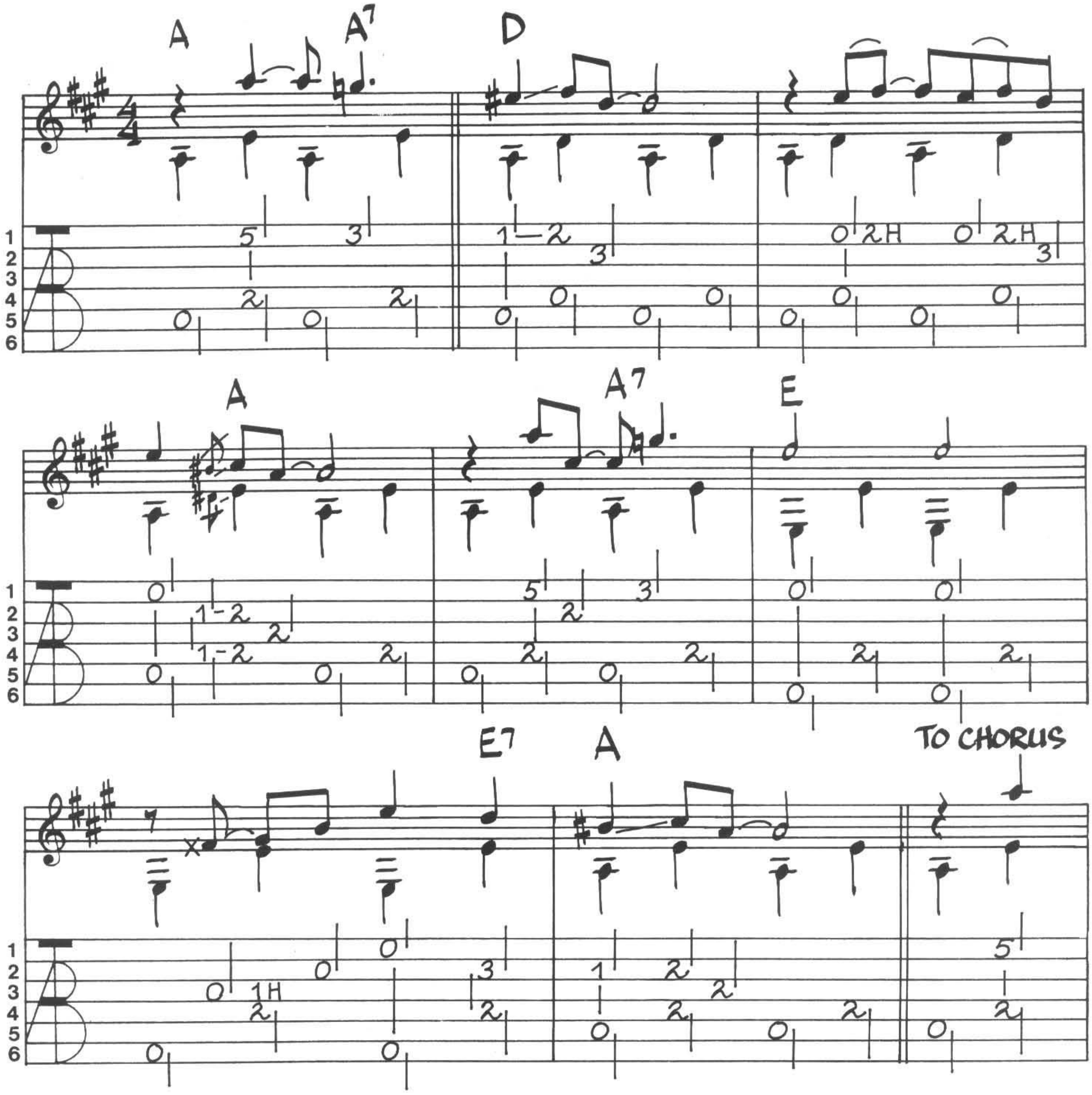
"Good mornin', baby, how you do this mornin'?
Well, please, ma'am, just a lovin' . . ."

Oh, the womens in Greenwood,‡they raisin' sand,**
It's all about that lovin' . . .
That lovin' spoonful.
I declare, it's all right, that lovin' . . .

---

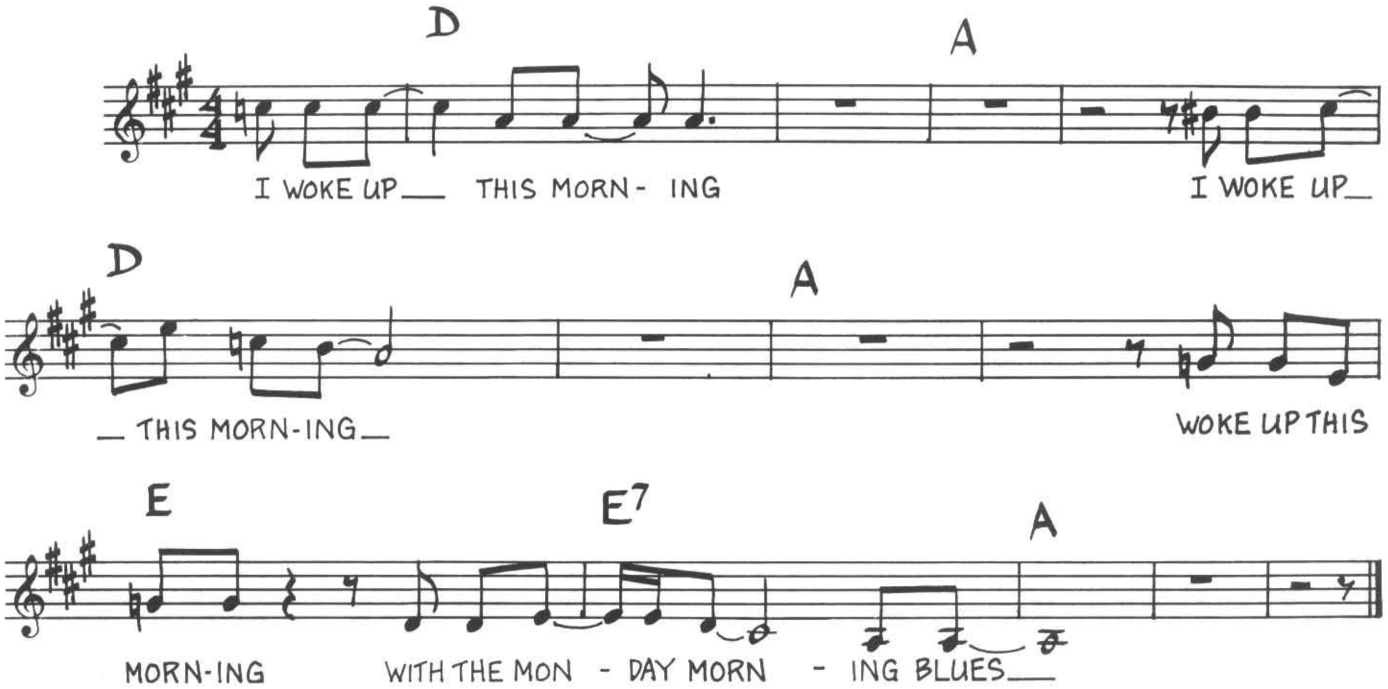
‡*Greenwood:* a Mississippi Delta town.
** *raisin' sand*: a Southern euphemism for raising hell.
**Leland:* a town in the Mississippi Delta.

COFFEE BLUES


A
A7
D
A
A7
E
E7
A
TO CHORUS
H
1H

MONDAY MORNING BLUES

by John Hurt


D
A
I WOKE UP__ THIS MORN- ING
I WOKE UP__
D
A
__ THIS MORN-ING__
WOKE UP THIS
E
E7
A
MORN-ING
WITH THE MON - DAY MORN - ING BLUES__

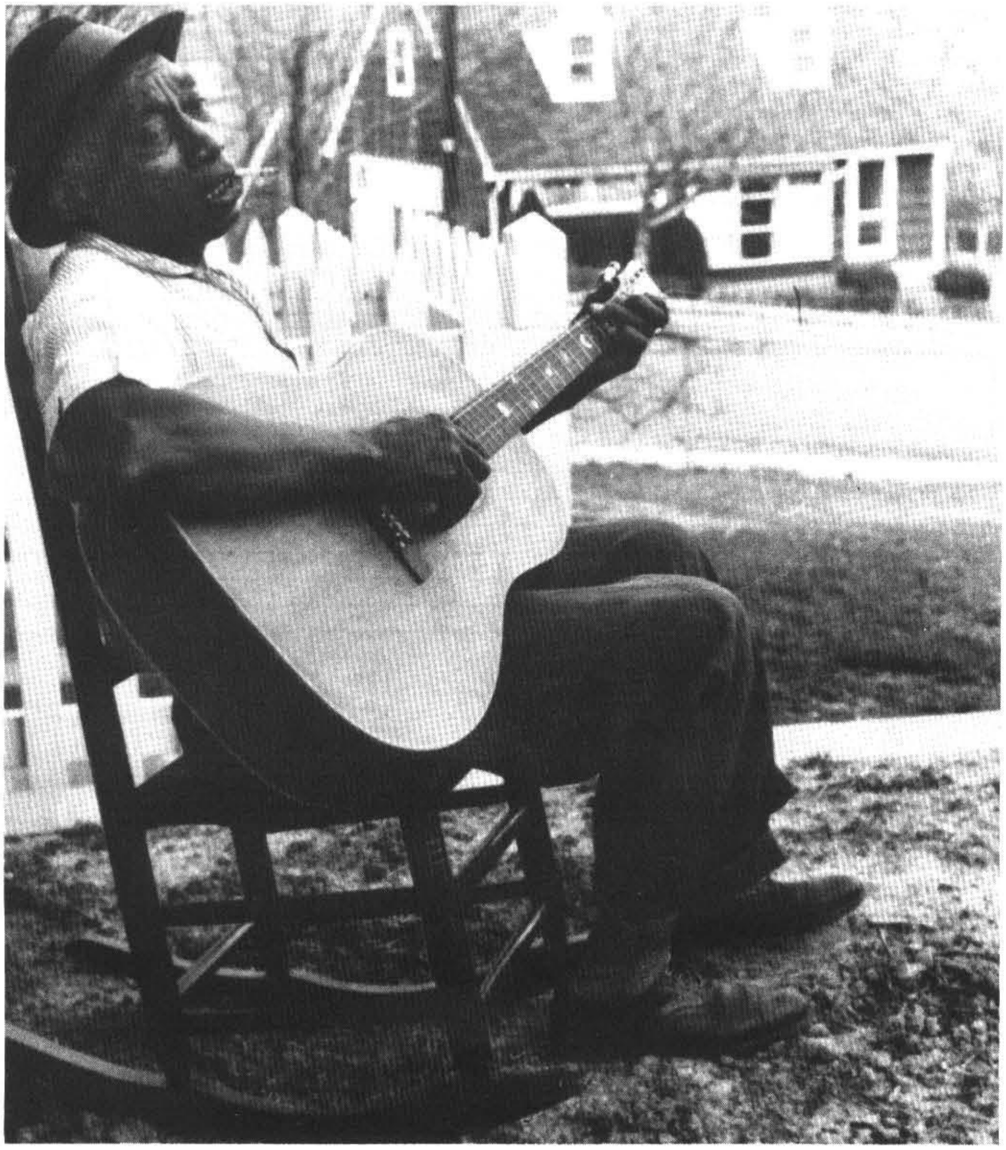


Photo by Tom Hoskins

MONDAY MORNING BLUES

I woke up this morning...
I woke up this morning...
Woke up this morning, with the monday morning blues.

I couldn't hardly find...
I couldn't hardly find...
I couldn't hardly find, my monday morning shoes.

Monday morning blues...
Monday morning blues...
Monday morning blues, searched all through my bones.

Monday morning blues...
Monday morning blues...
Monday morning blues, made me leave my home.

I've been laying in jail...
I've been laying in jail...
I've been laying in jail, six long weeks today.

Lord, tomorrow morning...
Lord, tomorrow morning...
Lord, tomorrow morning, gonna be my trial day.

Lord, I asked the judge...
Well, I asked the judge...
Well, I asked the judge, what might be my crime.

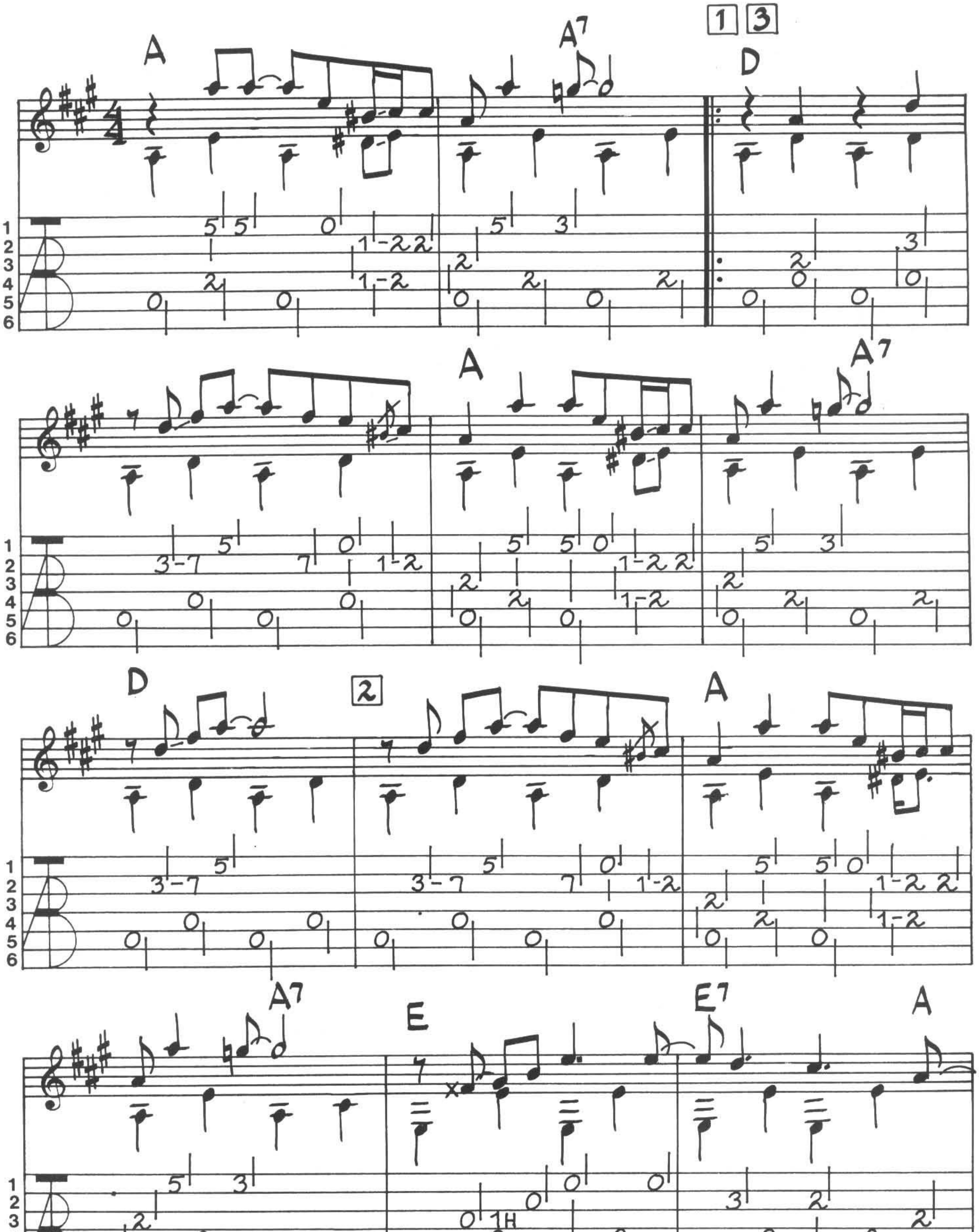
Get a pick and shovel...
Get a pick and shovel...
Get a pick and shovel, let's go down in the mine.

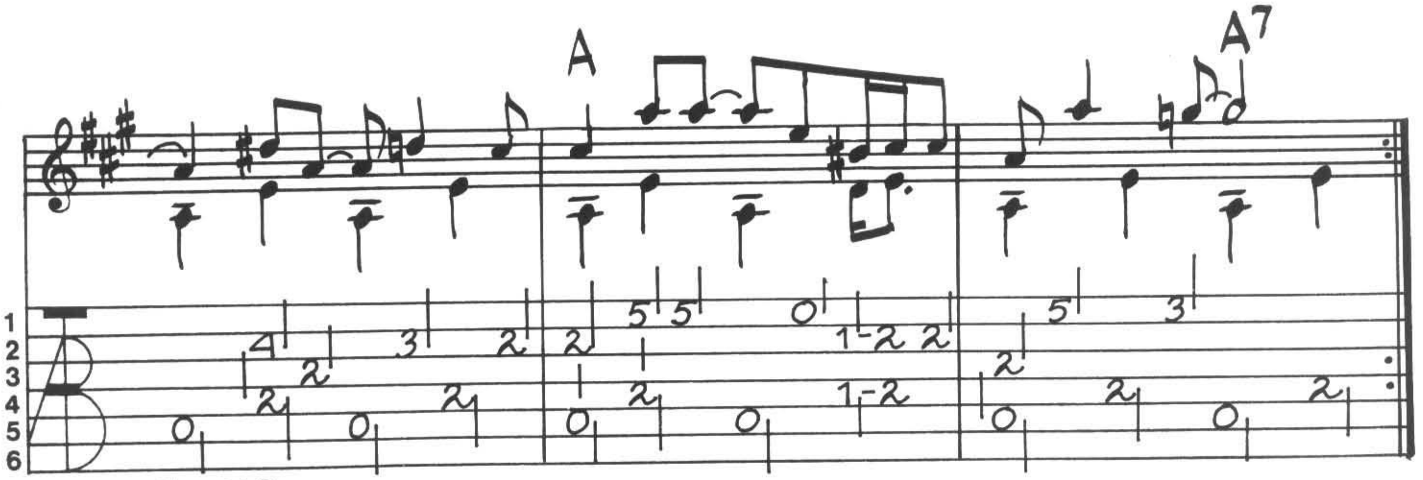
That's the only time...
That's the only time...
That's the only time, I ever felt like cryin'.

Well, my heart struck sorrow...
Well, my heart struck sorrow...
Well, my heart struck sorrow, tears come rolling down.

Repeat first verse.

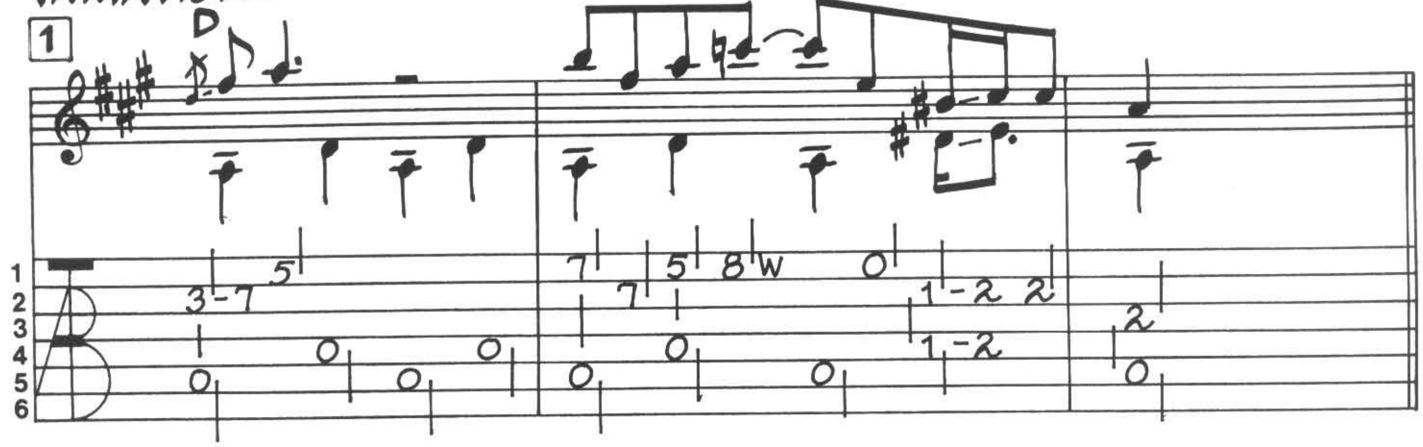
MONDAY MORNING BLUES


1
3
A
A7
D
2
A
A7
D
A
A7
E
E7
A
1H

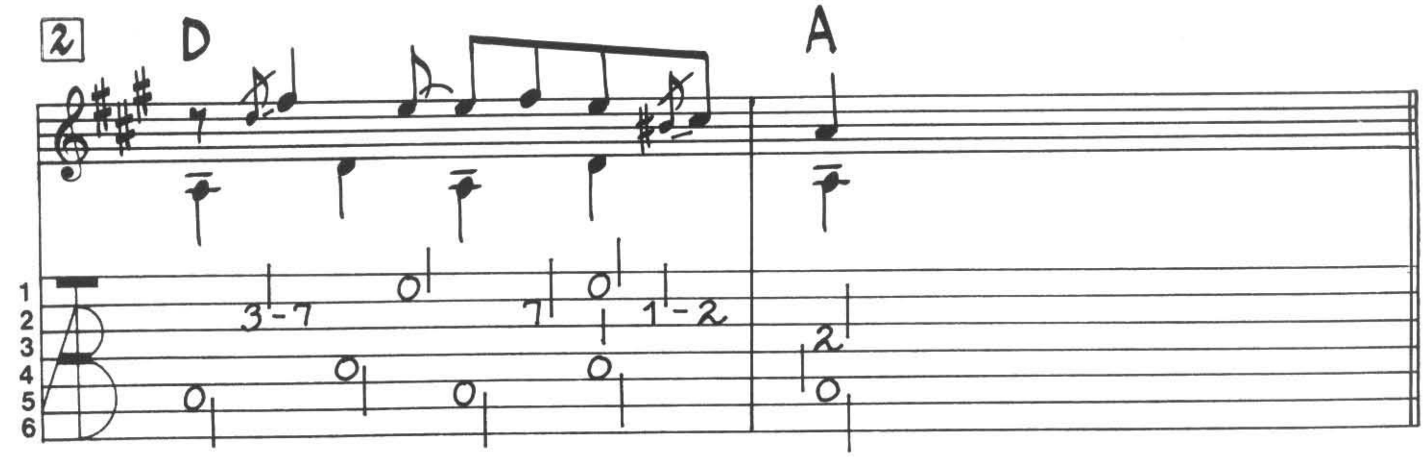


VARIATIONS

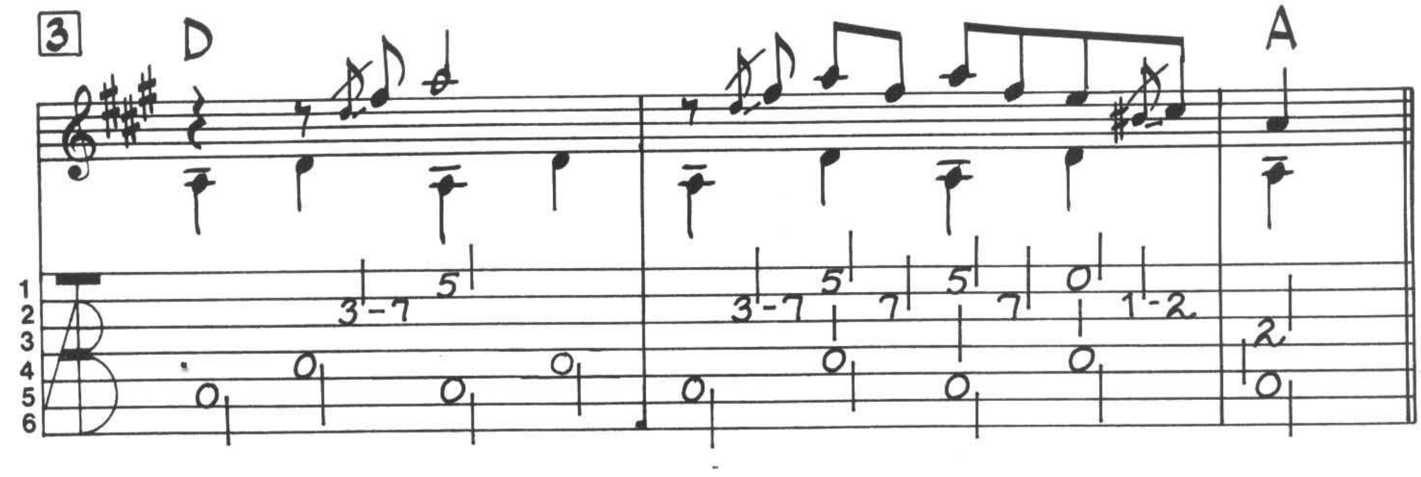
1



2

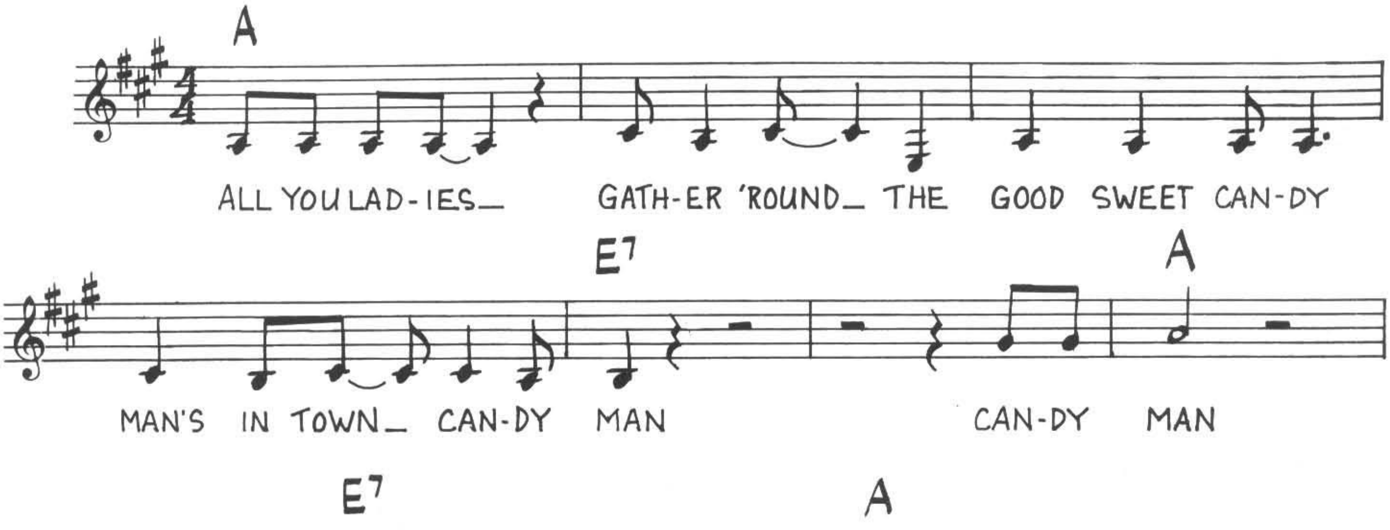


3



CANDYMAN

by John Hurt


A
ALL YOU LAD-IES_ GATH-ER 'ROUND_ THE GOOD SWEET CAN-DY
E7
A
MAN'S IN TOWN_ CAN-DY MAN CAN-DY MAN
E7
A

All you ladies, gather 'round,
The good, sweet candyman's in town,
Candyman, Candyman!

He's got stick candy that's nine inches long,
He sells it faster than a hog can chew his corn,
Candyman, candyman!

All heard what sister Johnson said,
She always takes a candystick to bed,
Candyman, candyman!

Aw, his stick candy don't melt away,
It just gets better, so the ladies say,
Candyman, candyman!

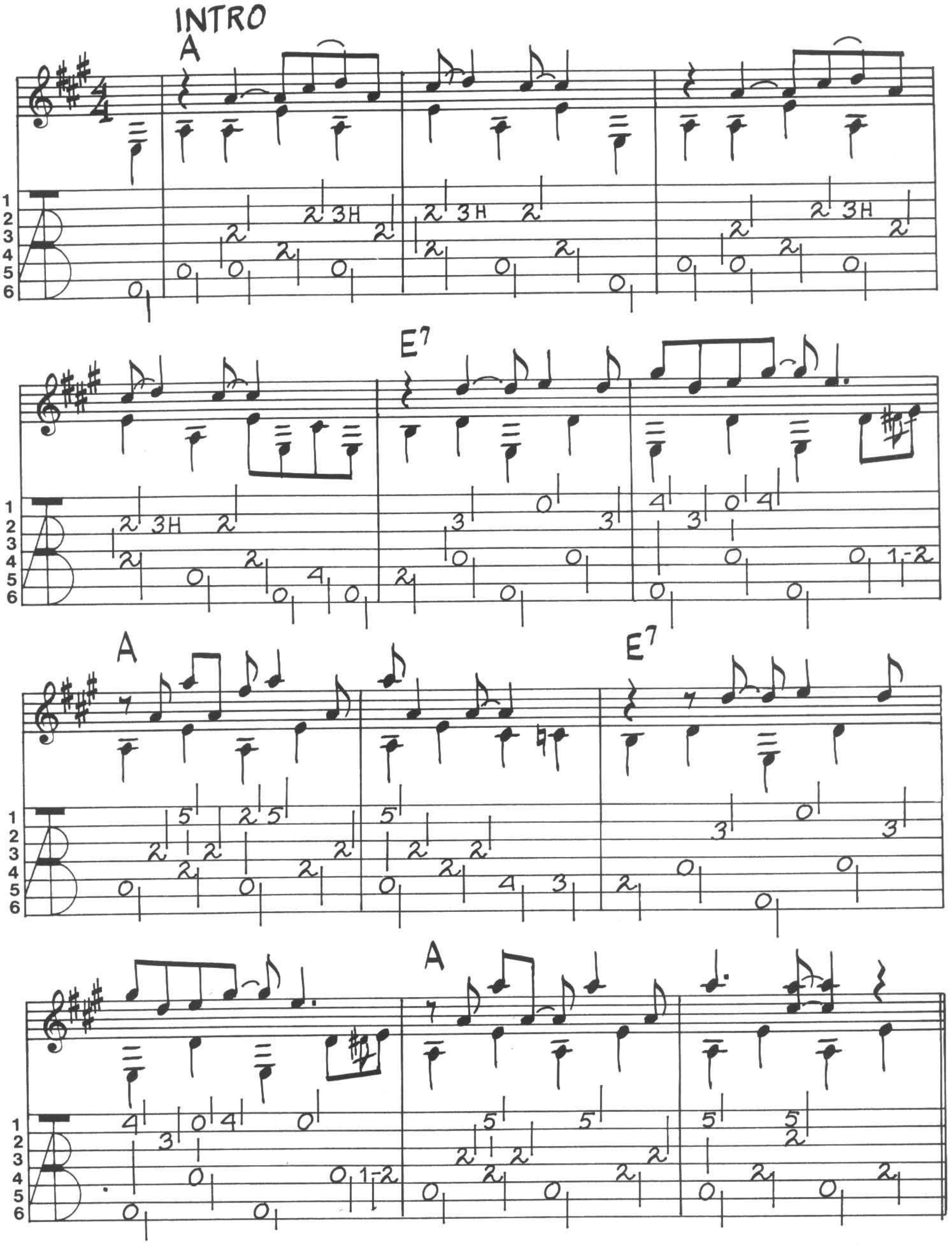
Yes, can't stand close to the candyman,
He'll ease a stick of candy in your hand,
Candyman, candyman!

Yes, you and the candyman, you're gettin'
mighty sick, mm hmm . . .

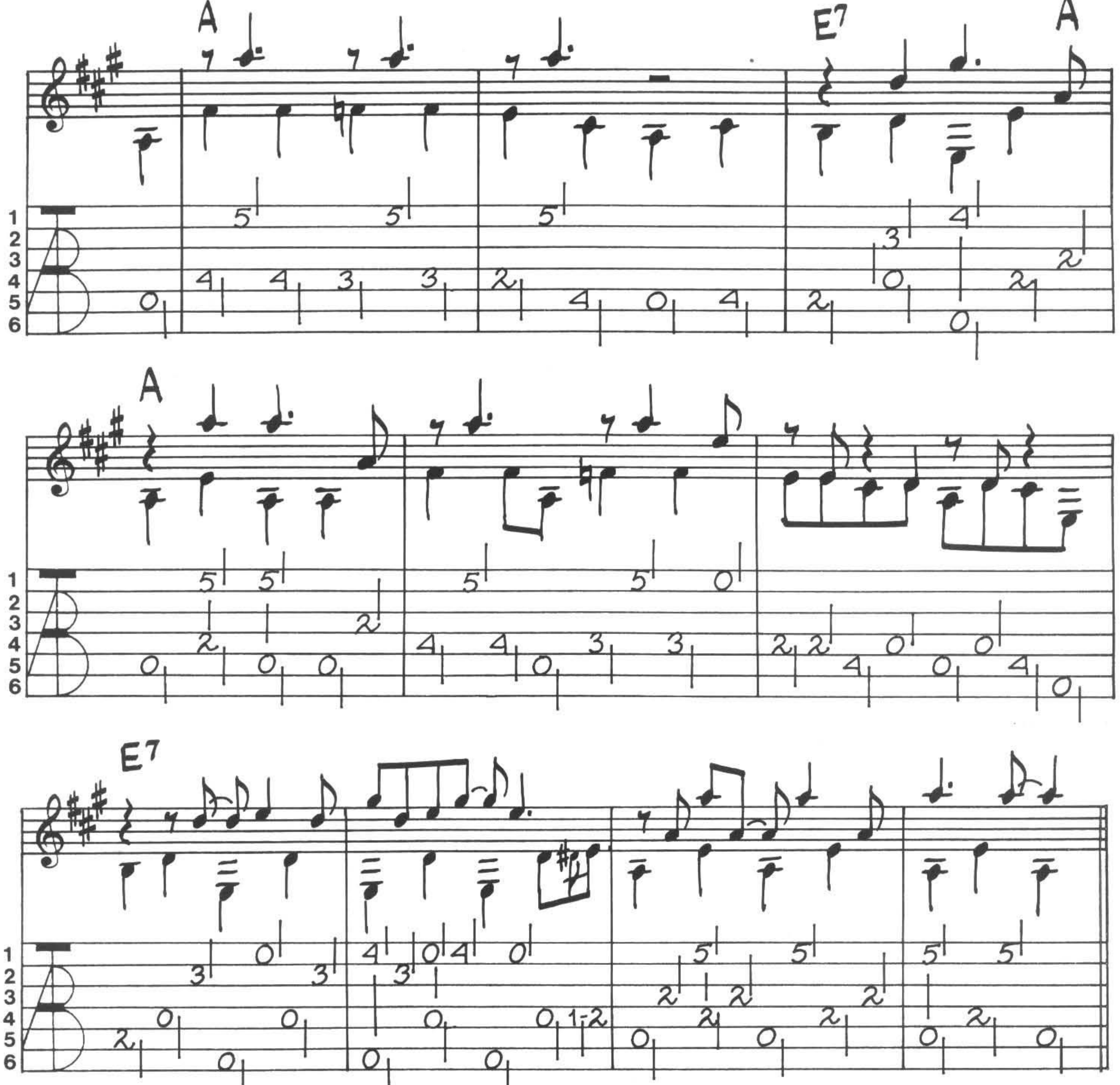
Uuh huh, oh yeah,
Oh yeah, yes, yes!

I say, you and the candyman, you're gettin'
mighty sick, mm hmm, mm hmm,
You must be stuck on the candyman's stick,
oh yeah, oh yeah.

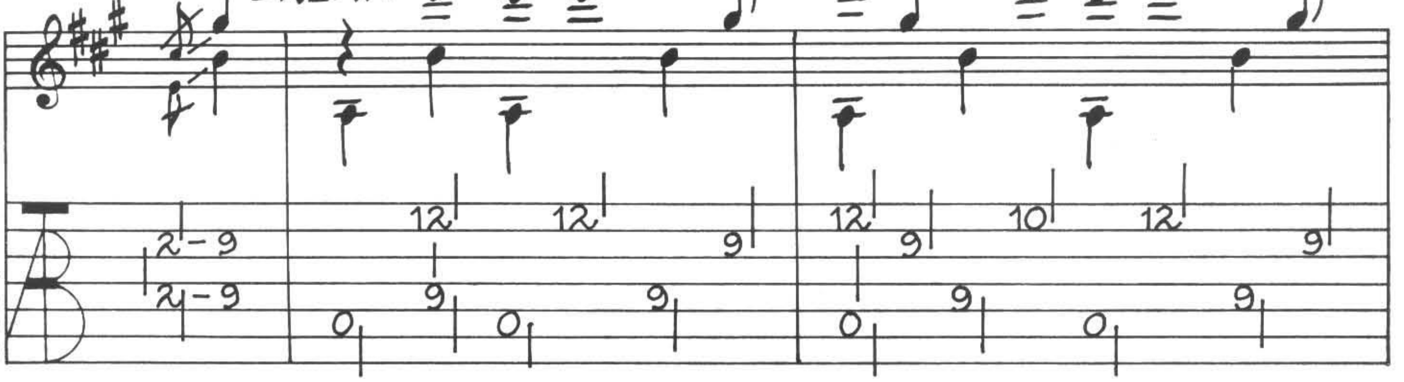
CANDYMAN

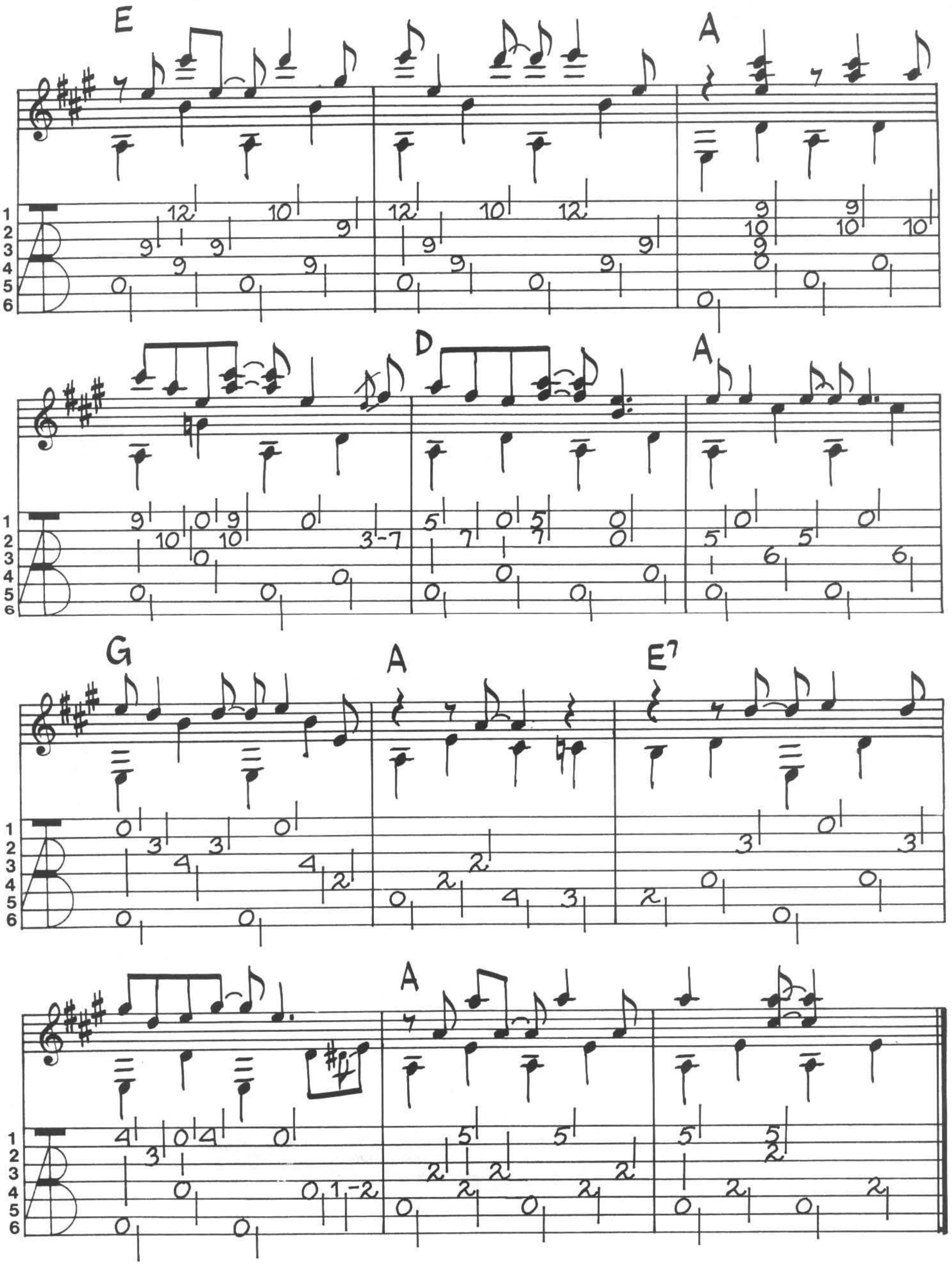

INTRO
A
E7
A
E7
A

SIXTH VERSE



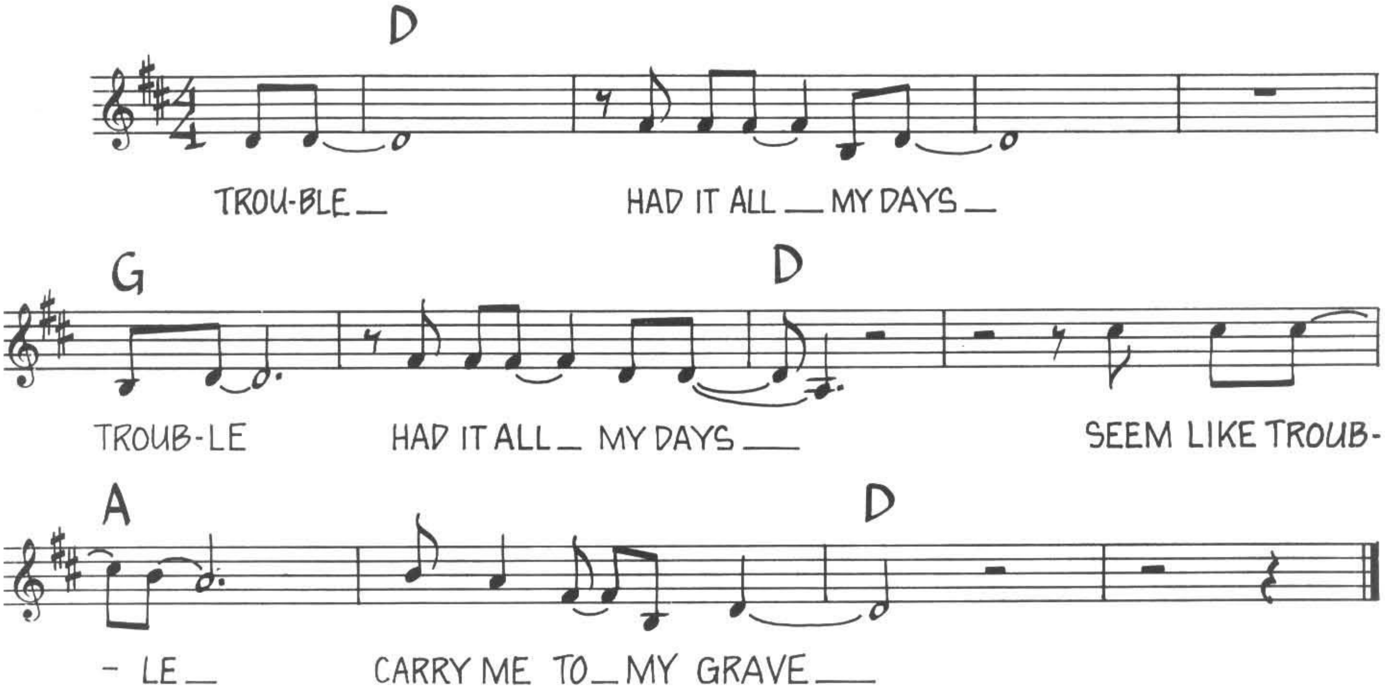
SECOND GUITAR BREAK




E
A
D
A
G
A
E7
A

TROUBLE I'VE HAD ALL MY DAYS

by John Hurt


D
TROU-BLE
HAD IT ALL MY DAYS
G
D
TROUB-LE
HAD IT ALL MY DAYS
SEEM LIKE TROUB-
A
D
- LE
CARRY ME TO MY GRAVE

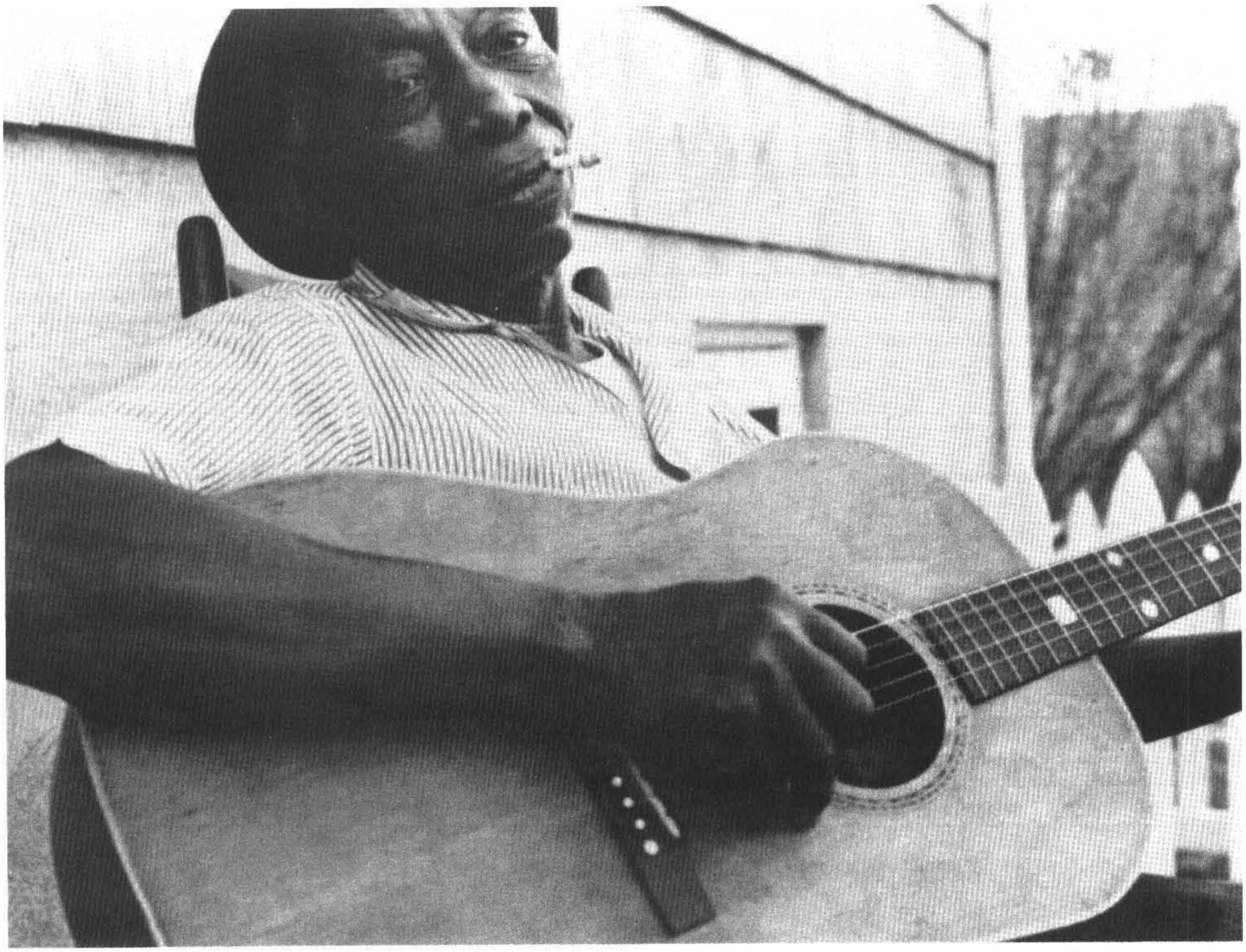


Photo by Tom Hoskins

TROUBLE I'VE HAD ALL MY DAYS

1. Trouble, had it all my days.
Trouble, had it all my days.
Seem like trouble, carry me to my grave.

2. My momma told me, before I left her door.
Lord, momma told me...
Gonna have trouble, Son every where you go.

3. Well, you talk about trouble, I had it all my days.
Trouble, had it all my days.
Seem like trouble, gonna carry me to my grave.

4. Lord, I wish my baby, stop her evil ways.
Lord, I wish my baby...
Wish my baby, would stop her evil ways.

5. Seems like trouble...
Trouble, had it all my days.
I believe trouble, gonna carry me to my grave.

6. But tell me baby, what's the matter now.
Baby, tell me what's a matter now.
If your gonna quit your daddy anyhow.

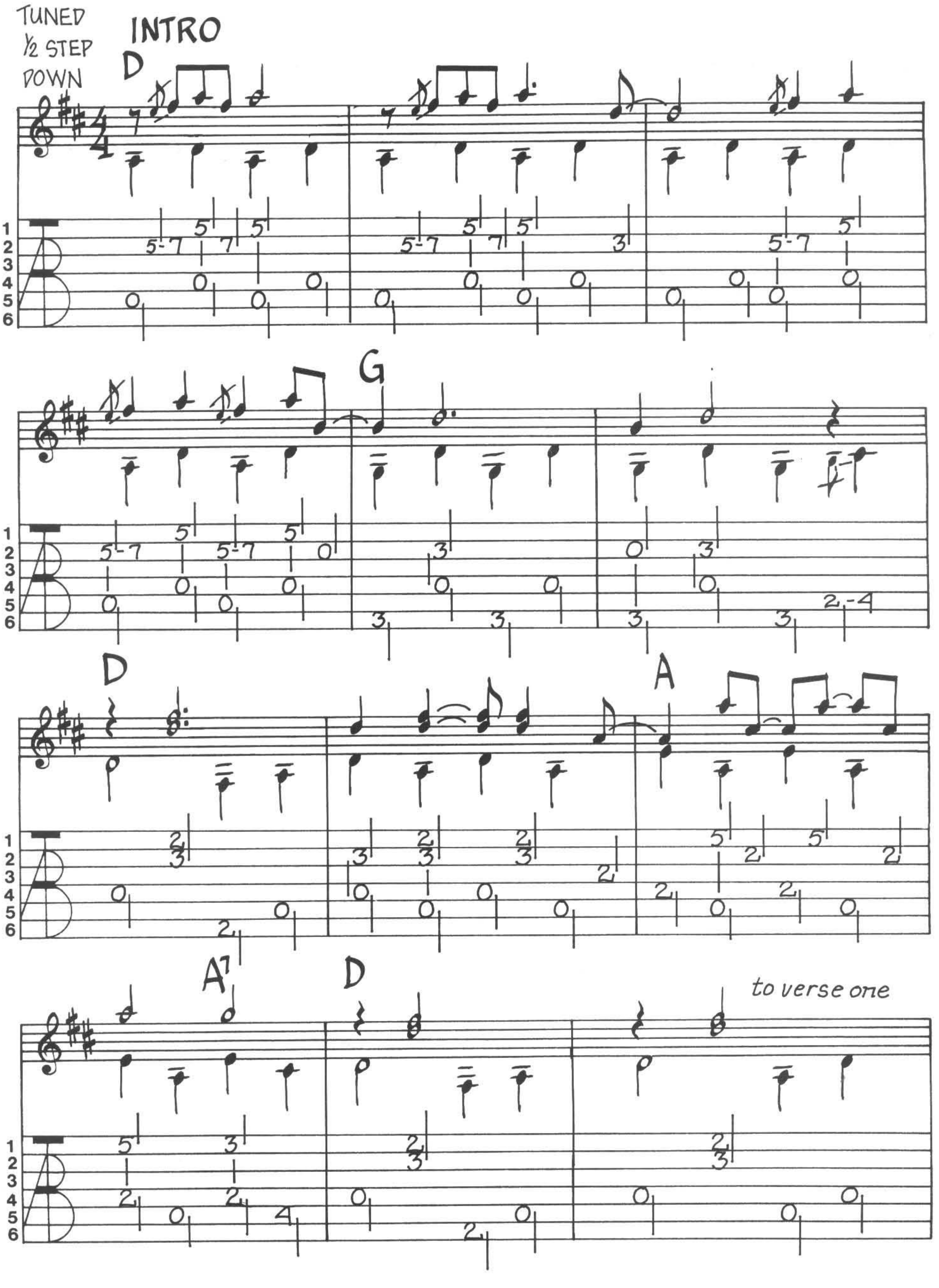
7. Well trouble, trouble, I had it all my days.
Trouble, had it all my days.
Seem like trouble, gonna carry me to my grave.

8. I was walking down the street, just couldn't keep from cryin'.
...couldn't keep from cryin'.
The girl I love, she sure was on my mind.

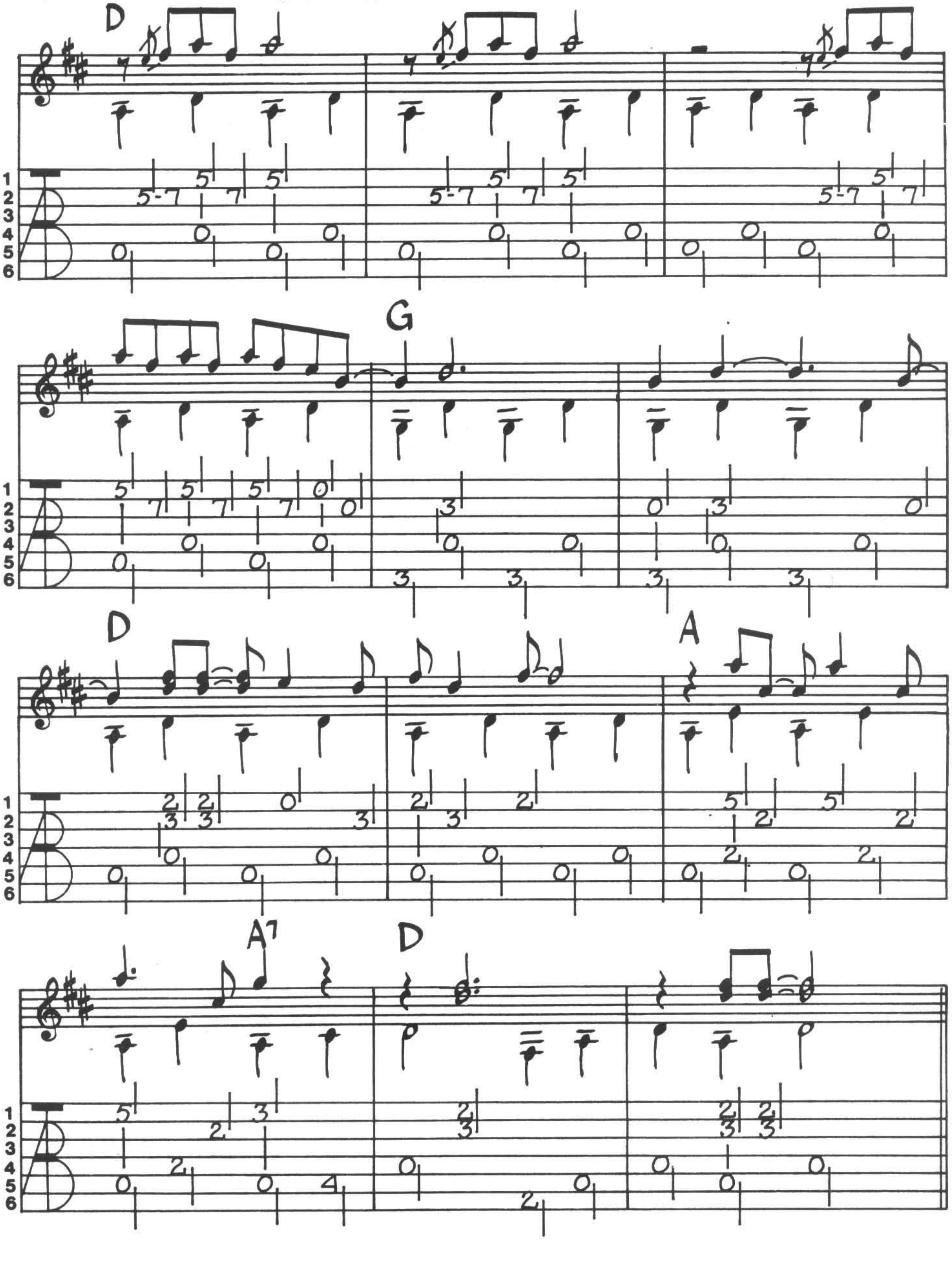
9. Lord, the police arrested me, put me in jail.
Police arrested me, put me in jail.
I didn't have nobody, come and go my bail.

10. Lord, you talk about trouble, I've had it all my days.
Trouble, had it all my days.
Seem like trouble, gonna carry me to my grave.

TROUBLE I'VE HAD ALL MY DAYS

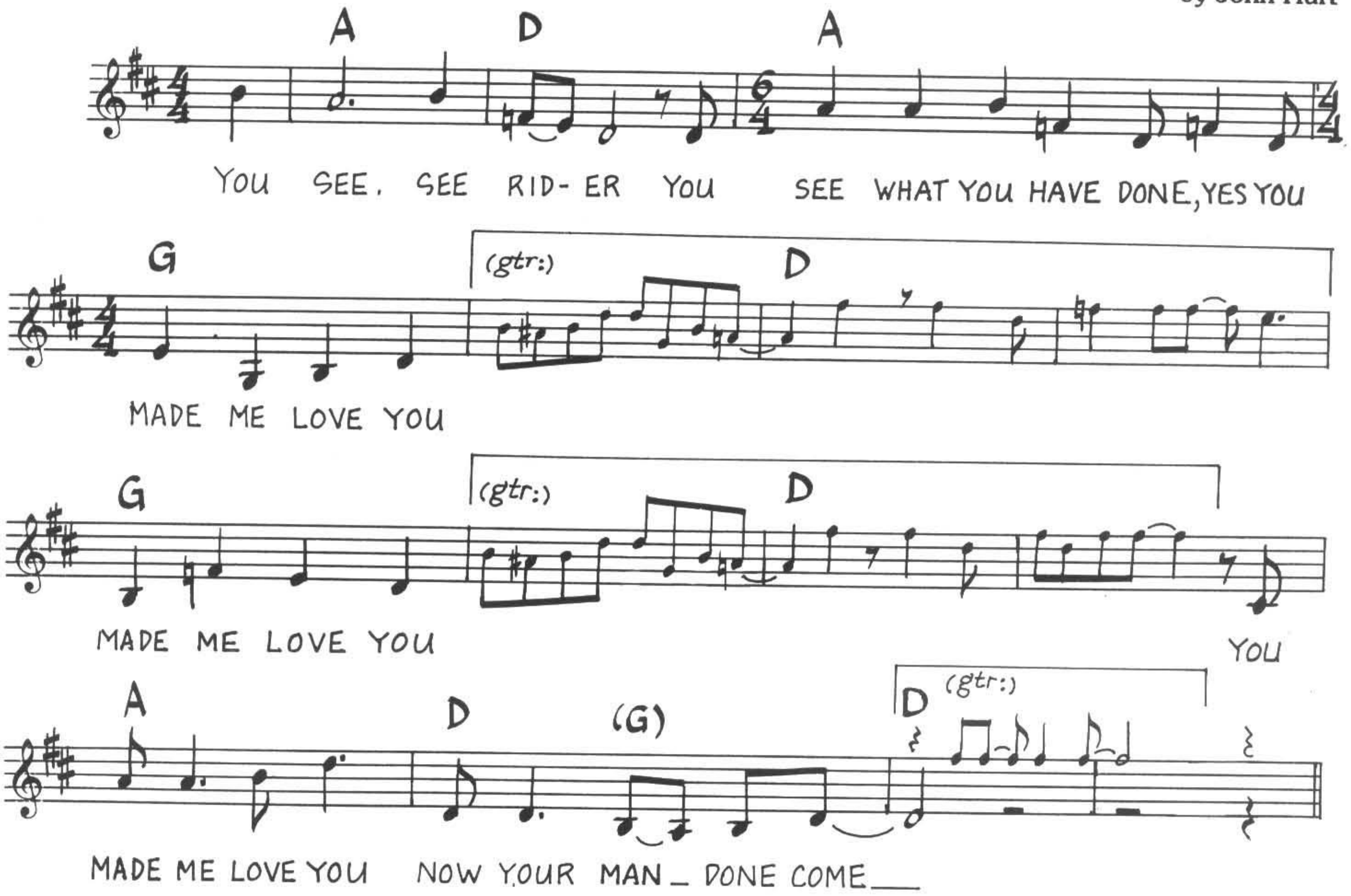

TUNED
½ STEP
DOWN
INTRO
D
G
D
A
A7
D
to verse one

FIRST GUITAR BREAK


D
G
D
A
A7
D
1
2
3
4
5
6

SEE SEE RIDER

by John Hurt


A
D
A
YOU SEE, SEE RID- ER YOU SEE WHAT YOU HAVE DONE, YES YOU
G
(gtr:)
D
MADE ME LOVE YOU
G
(gtr:)
D
MADE ME LOVE YOU
YOU
A
D
(G)
D
(gtr:)
MADE ME LOVE YOU NOW YOUR MAN _ DONE COME ___

You see, see, rider, you see what you have done?
You made me love you . . .
Made me love you, now your man done come,
You made me love you, now your man have come.

Ain't no more potatoes, the frost have killed the vine,
Well, the blues ain't nothin' but a good woman on your mind,
The blues ain't nothin' but a good woman on your mind,
The blues ain't nothin' but a good woman on your mind.

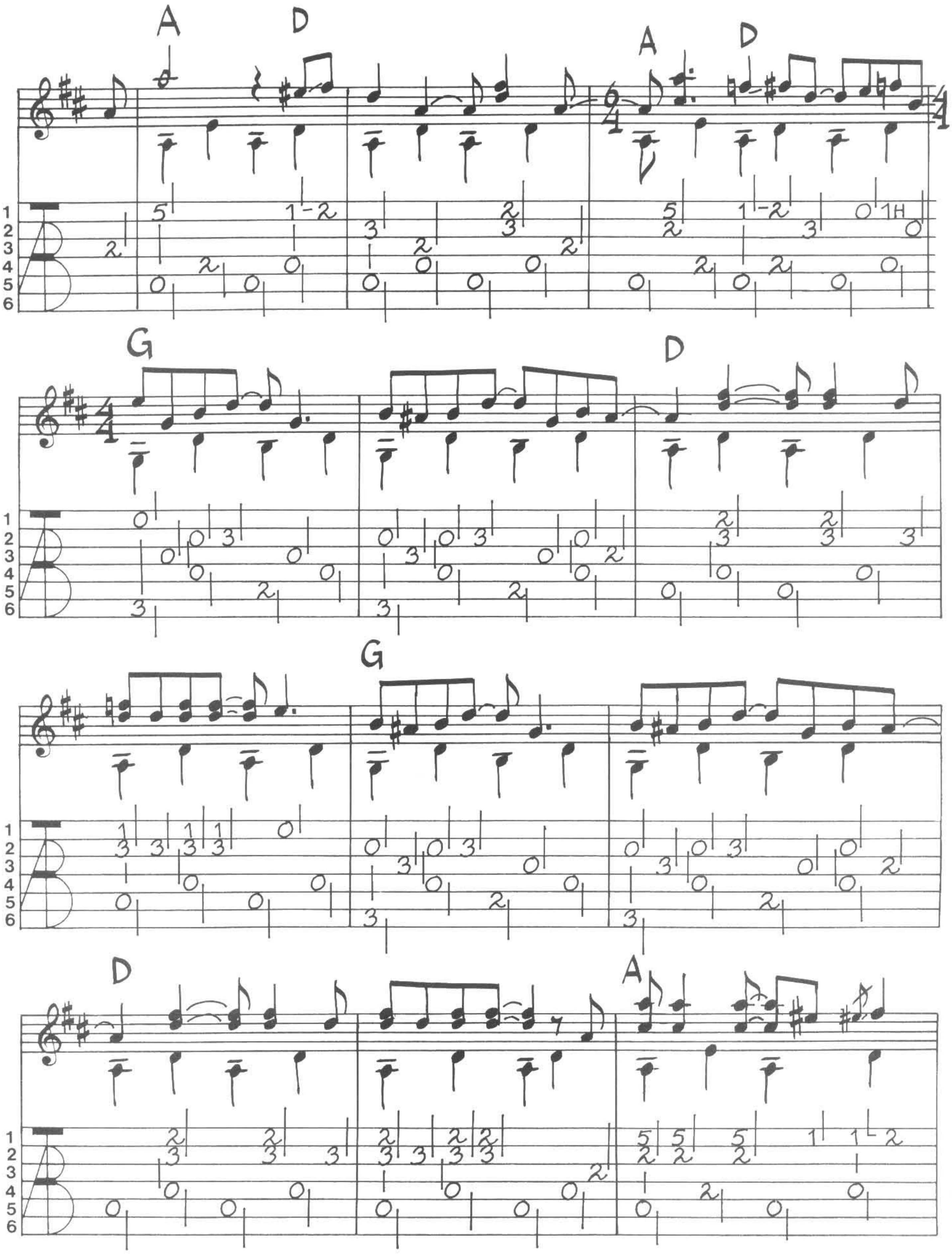
You see, see, rider, you see what you done?
You done made me love you . . .
You made me love you . . .

I've told you, baby, and your mama told you, too,
"You're three times seven, you know what you wanna do,
Three times seven, you know what you wanna do,
You're three times seven, you know what you wanna do."

If I hadda listened to my second mind,
Lord, I wouldn't been sittin' here and wringin' my hands and cryin',
I wouldn't been sittin' here and wringin' my hands and cryin',
I wouldn't been sittin' here, wringin' my hands and cryin'.

You see, see, rider, you see what you have done?
You done made me love you . . .

SEE SEE RIDER



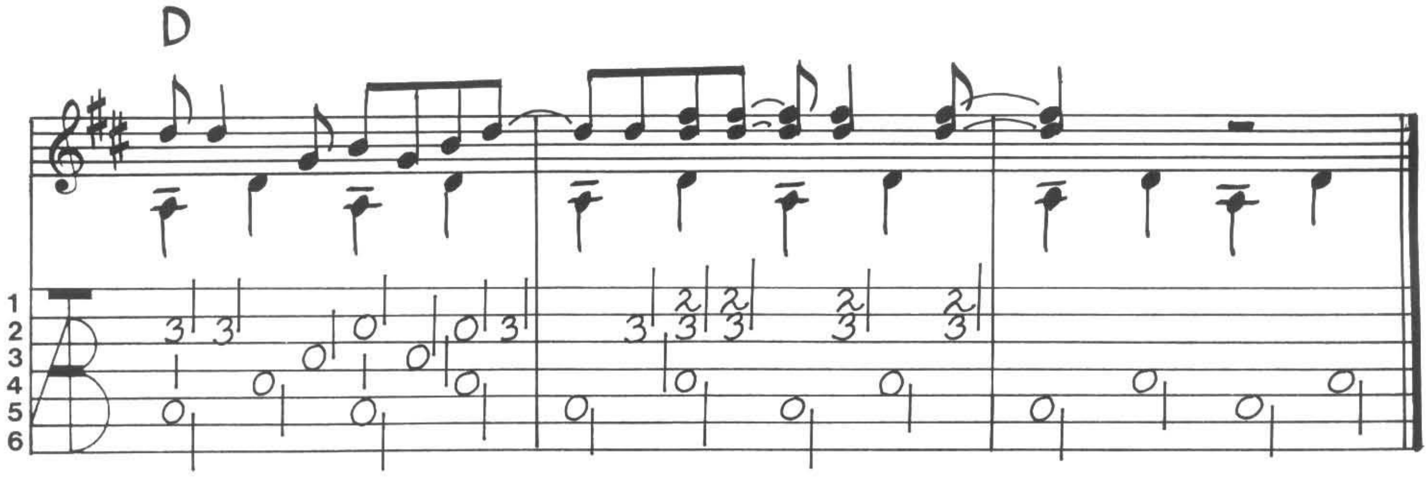
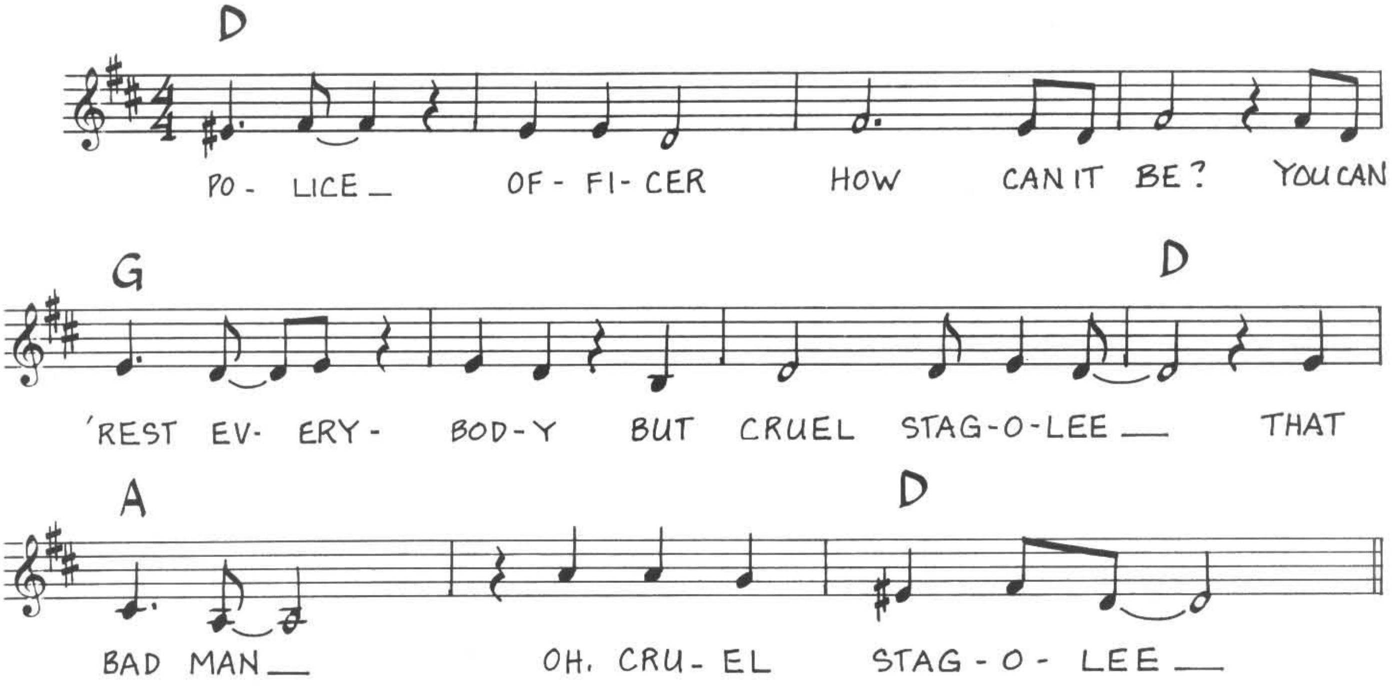


Photo by J. Robert Mauth

STACK O'LEE BLUES

by John Hurt


D
PO - LICE — OF - FI - CER HOW CAN IT BE? YOU CAN
G
'REST EV - ERY - BOD - Y BUT CRUEL STAG-O-LEE — THAT
D
A
BAD MAN — OH, CRU - EL STAG - O - LEE —
D

Police officer, how can it be?
You can 'rest everybody but cruel Stagger Lee.
That bad man, oh, cruel Stagger Lee.

Billy de Lyon told Stagger Lee, "Please don't take my life.
I got two little babies, and a darlin' lovin' wife."
That bad man, oh, cruel Stagger Lee.

"What I care about your two little babies, your darlin' lovin' wife?
You done stole my Stetson hat, I'm bound to take your life."
That bad man, cruel Stagger Lee.

Fourth and fifth verses hummed.

... with the forty-four.
When I spied Billy de Lyon, he was lyin" down on the floor.
That bad man, oh cruel Stagger Lee.

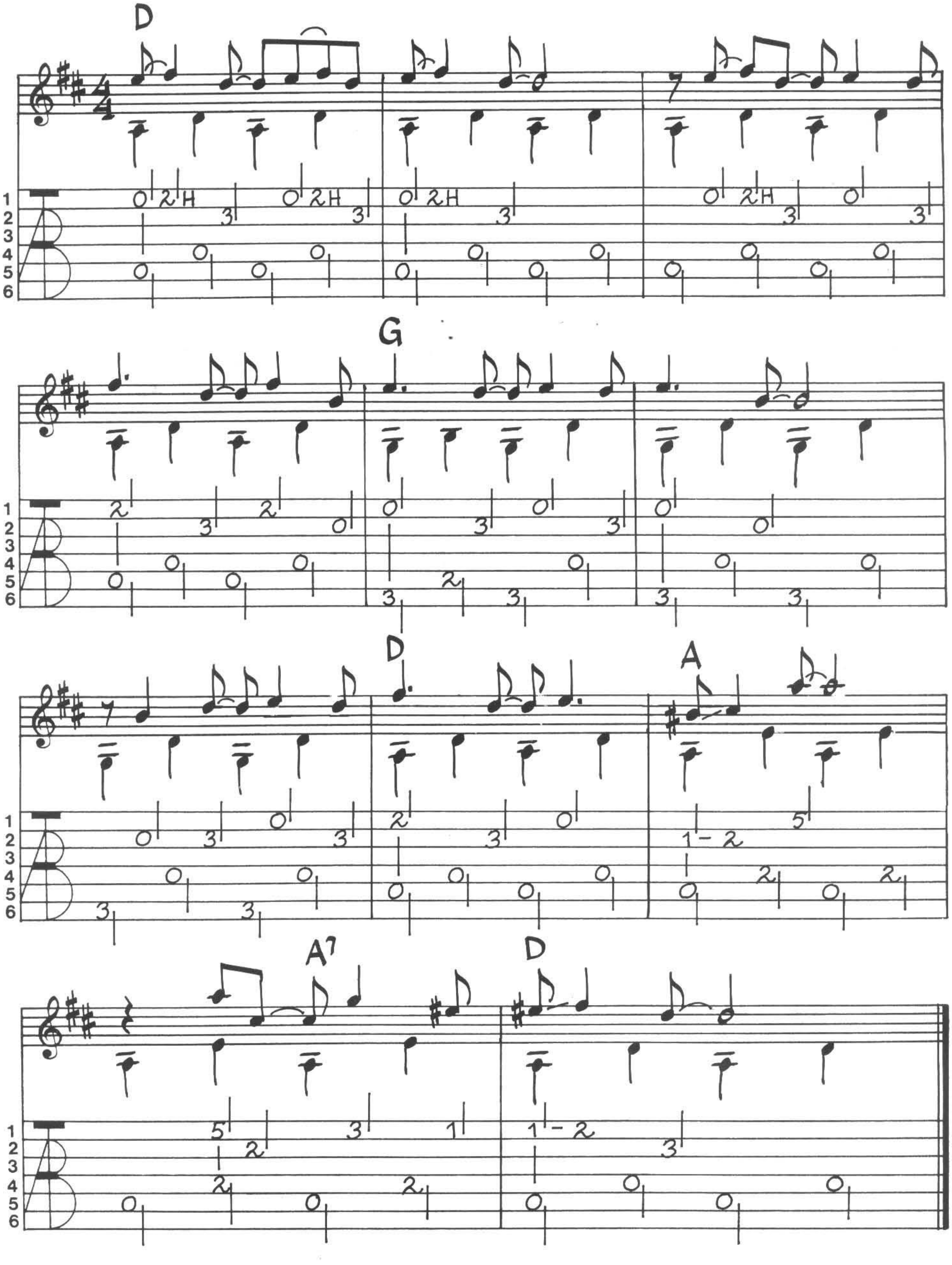
"Gentlemans of the jury, what you think of that?
Stagger Lee killed Billy de Lyon about a five-dollar Stetson hat."
That bad man, oh, cruel Stagger Lee.

And all they gathered, hands way up high,
At twelve o'clock they killed him, they's all glad to see him die.
That bad man, oh, cruel Stagger Lee.

---

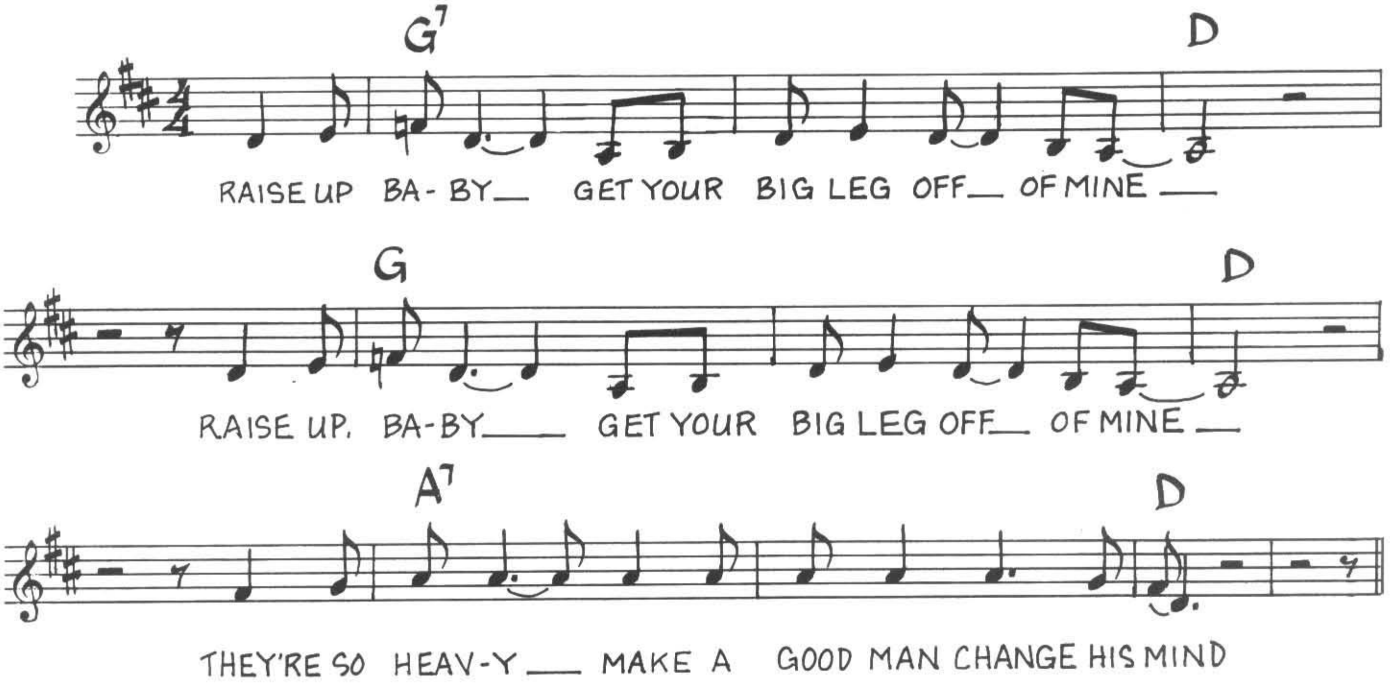
* Despite his popularity as the anti-hero of this traditional song and of a Negro toast, "Stagger Lee" (or "Stack O'Lee," as he was sometimes called) has no known historical identity. The name may derive from the *Stacker Lee*, the third of fourteen steamships built by the Lee Line of memphis, all of which were named after children of the owner, It ran between Memphis and Friar's Point. Mississippi, and first saw service sometime before 1890. Robert Wilkins' "Alabama Blues" *(q.v.)* contains a reference to the same ship.

STACK O'LEE BLUES


D
H
H
H
H
1
2
3
4
5
6
G
D
A
A7
D

BIG LEG BLUES

by John Hurt


G7
D
RAISE UP BA-BY GET YOUR BIG LEG OFF OF MINE
G
D
RAISE UP, BA-BY GET YOUR BIG LEG OFF OF MINE
A7
D
THEY'RE SO HEAV-Y MAKE A GOOD MAN CHANGE HIS MIND

Raise up, baby, get your big leg offa mine,
Raise up, baby, get your big leg offa mine,
They're so heavy, make a good man change his mind.

I asked you baby to come and hold my head,
I ask you baby to come and hold my head,
Send me word that you'd rather see me dead.

I'm goin', I'm goin', your cryin' won't make me stay,
I'm goin', I'm goin', cryin' won't make me stay,
More you cry, the further you drive me away.

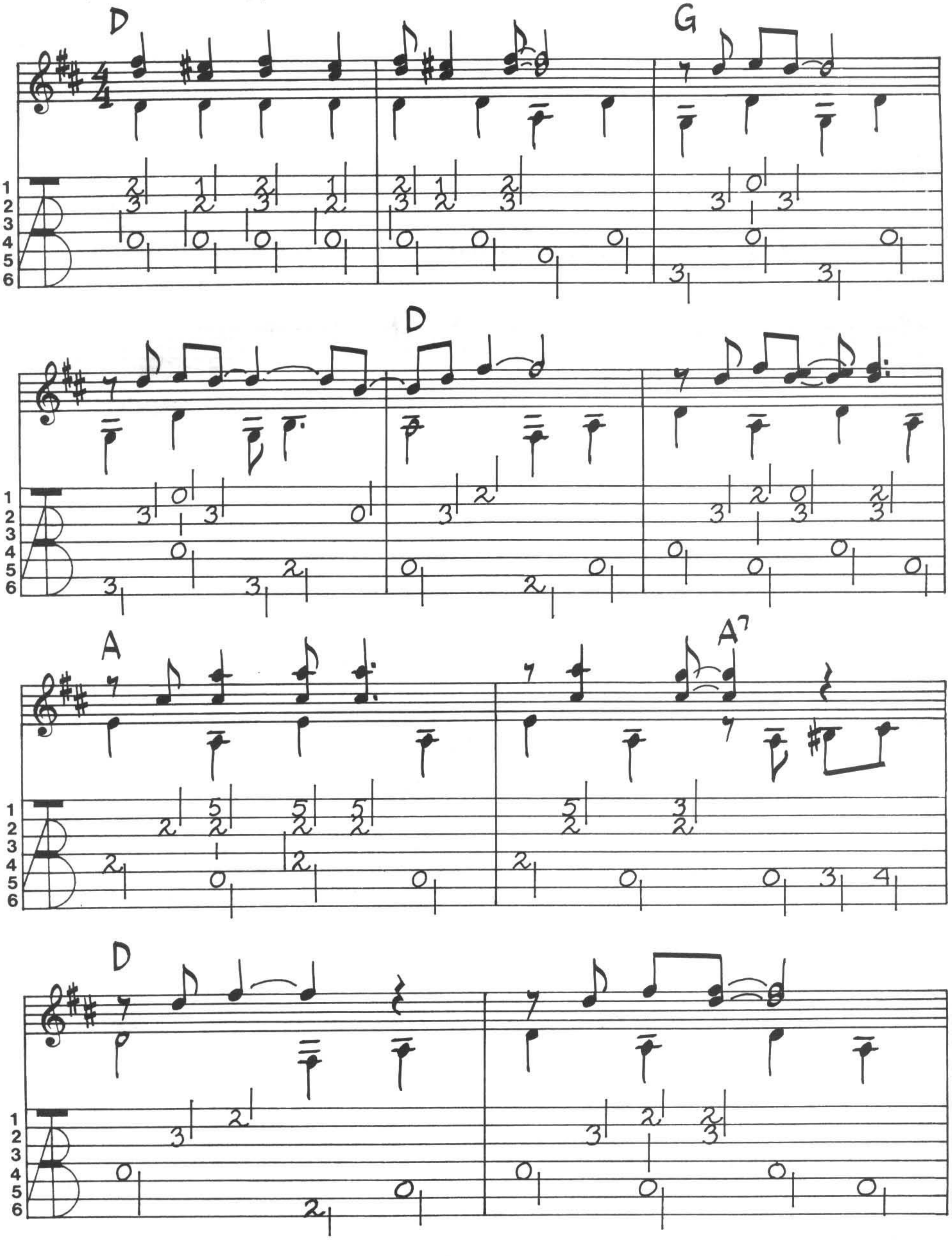
Some crave high yellow, I like black and brown,
Some crave high yellow, I like black and brown,
Black won't quit you, brown won't lay you down.

It was late at midnight and the moon shine bright like day,
It was late at midnight and moon shine bright like day,
I seen your faror* goin' up the right of way.

* The spelling of "faror," a Mississippi blues synonym for girl friend, is problematic. It is pronounced like "pharaoh." The late Johnnie Temple provided blues researcher Gayle Wardlow with the spelling used.

BIG LEG BLUES

FIRST GUITAR BREAK


D
G
D
A
A7
D
1
2
3
4
5
6

SECOND GUITAR BREAK

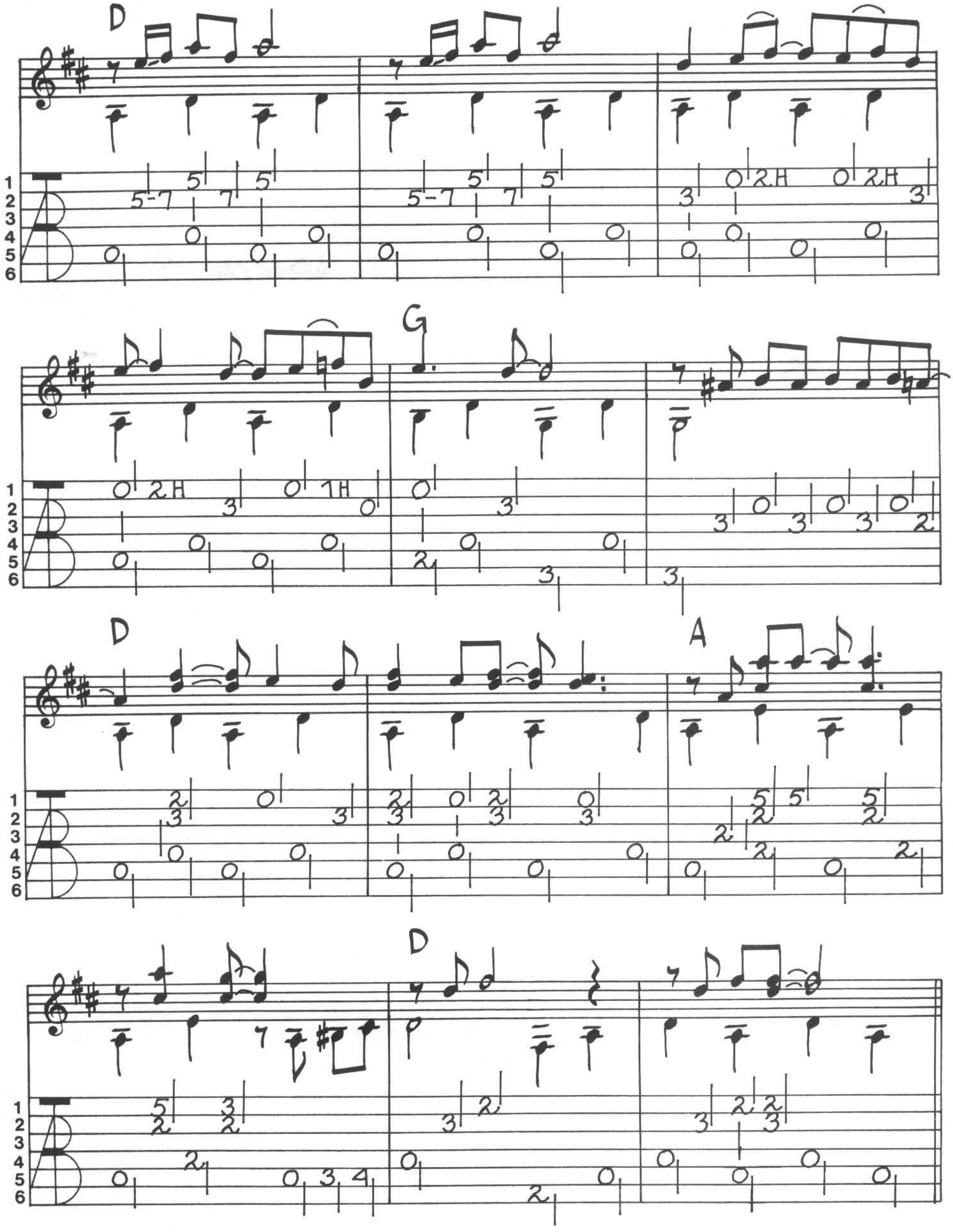

D
G
D
A
D
1
2
3
4
5
6

Photo by J. Robert Mant